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*CANADIAN BORN.*<sup>1</sup>

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.

CHAPTER I.

'I CALL this part of the line beastly depressing.'

The speaker tossed his cigarette-end away as he spoke. It fell on the railway line, and the tiny smoke from it curled up for a moment against the heavy background of spruce as the train receded.

'All the same, this is going to be one of the most exciting parts of Canada before long,' said Lady Merton, looking up from her guide-book. 'I can tell you all about it.'

'For heaven's sake, don't!' said her companion hastily. 'My dear Elizabeth, I really must warn you. You're losing your head.'

'I lost it long ago. To-day I am a bore—to-morrow I shall be a nuisance. Make up your mind to it.'

'I thought you were a reasonable person—you used to be. Now look at that view, Elizabeth. We've seen the same thing for twelve hours, and if it wasn't soon going to be dark we should see the same thing for twelve hours more. What is there to go mad over in that?' Her brother waved his hand indignantly from right to left across the disappearing scene. 'As for me, I am only sustained by the prospect of the good dinner that I know Yerkes means to give us in a quarter of an hour. I won't be a minute late for it! Go and get ready, Elizabeth—'

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'Another lake!' cried Lady Merton, with a jump. 'Oh, what a darling! That's the twentieth since tea. Look at the reflections—and that delicious island! And oh! what *are* those birds?'

She leant over the side of the observation platform, attached to the private car in which she and her brother were travelling, at the rear of the heavy Canadian Pacific train. To the left of the train a small blue lake had come into view, a lake much indented, with small bays running up among the woods, and a couple of islands covered with scrub of beech and spruce, set sharply on the clear water. On one side of the lake, the forest was a hideous waste of burnt trunks, where the gaunt stems—charred or singed, snapped or twisted, or flayed—of the trees which remained standing, rose dreadfully into the May sunshine, above a chaos of black ruin below. But except for this blemish—the only sign of man—the little lake was a gem of beauty. The spring green clothed its rocky sides; the white spring clouds floated above it, and within it; and small beaches of white pebbles seemed to invite the human feet which had scarcely yet come near them.

'What does it matter?' yawned her brother. 'I don't want to shoot them. And why you make such a fuss about the lakes, when, as you say yourself, there are about two a mile, and none of them has got a name to its back, and they're all exactly alike, and all full of beastly mosquitoes in the summer,—it beats me! I wish Yerkes would hurry up.' He leant back sleepily against the door of the car and closed his eyes.

'It's *because* they haven't got a name—and they're so endless!—and the place is so big!—and the people so few!—and the chances are so many—and so queer!' said Elizabeth Merton laughing.

'What sort of chances?'

'Chances of the future.'

'Hasn't got any chances!' said Philip Gaddesden, keeping his hands in his pockets.

'Hasn't it? Owl!' Lady Merton neatly pinched the arm nearest to her. 'As I've explained to you many times before, this is the Hinterland of Ontario—and it's only been surveyed, except just along the railway, a few years ago—and it's as rich as rich—'

'I say, I wish you wouldn't reel out the guide-book like that!' grumbled the somnolent person beside her. 'As if I didn't know all about the Cobalt mines, and that kind of stuff.'

'Did you make any money out of them, Phil?'

'No—but the other fellows did. That's my luck.'

'Never mind, there'll be heaps more directly—hundreds.' She stretched out her hand vaguely towards an enchanting distance—hill beyond hill, wood beyond wood; everywhere the glimmer of water in the hollows; everywhere the sparkle of fresh leaf, the shining of the birch trunks among the firs, the greys and purples of limestone rock; everywhere, too, the disfiguring stain of fire, fire new or old, written, now on the mouldering stumps of trees felled thirty years ago when the railway was making, now on the young stems of yesterday.

'I want to see it all in a moment of time,' Elizabeth continued, still above herself. 'An air-ship, you know, Philip—and we should see it all in a day, from here to James Bay. A thousand miles of it—stretched below us—just waiting for man! And we'd drop down into an undiscovered lake, and give it a name,—one of our names—and leave a letter under a stone. And then in a hundred years, when the settlers come, they'd find it, and your name—or mine—would live for ever.'

'I forbid you to take any liberties with my name, Elizabeth! I've something better to do with it than waste it on a lake in—what do you call it?—the "Hinterland of Ontario."' The young man mocked his sister's tone.

Elizabeth laughed and was silent.

The train sped on, at its steady pace of some thirty miles an hour. The spring day was alternately sunny and cloudy; the temperature was warm, and the leaves were rushing out. Elizabeth Merton felt the spring in her veins, an indefinable joyousness and expectancy; but she was conscious also of another intoxication—a heat of romantic perception, kindled in her by this vast new country through which she was passing. She was a person of much travel, and many experiences; and had it been prophesied to her a year before this date that she could feel as she was now feeling, she would not have believed it. She was then in Rome, steeped in, ravished by the past,—assisted by what is, in its way, the most agreeable society in Europe. Here she was absorbed in a rushing present; held by the vision of a colossal future; and society had dropped out of her ken. Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa had indeed made themselves pleasant to her; she had enjoyed them all. But it was in the wilderness that the spell had come upon her; in these vast spaces, some day to be the home of a new race; in these lakes, the playground of the Canada of the future;

in these fur stations and scattered log cabins; above all in the great railway linking east and west, that she and her brother had come out to see.

For they had a peculiar relation to it. Their father had been one of its earliest and largest shareholders, might indeed be reckoned among its founders. He had been one, also, of a small group of very rich men who had stood by the line in one of the many crises of its early history, when there was often not enough money in the coffers of the company to pay the weekly wages of the navvies working on the great iron road. He was dead now, and his property in the line had been divided among his children. But his name and services were not forgotten at Montreal, and when his son and widowed daughter let it be known that they desired to cross from Quebec to Vancouver, and inquired what the cost of a private car might be for the journey, the authorities at Montreal insisted on placing one of the official cars at their disposal. So that they were now travelling as the guests of the C.P.R.; and the good will of one of the most powerful of modern corporations went with them.

They had left Toronto, on a May evening, when the orchards ran, one flush of white and pink, from the great lake to the gorge of Niagara, and all along the line northwards the white trilliums shone on the grassy banks in the shadow of the woods; while the pleasant Ontario farms flitted by, so mellowed and homelike already, midway between the old life of Quebec, and this new, raw West to which they were going. They had passed, also,—but at night and under the moon—through the lake country which is the playground of Toronto, as well known, and as plentifully benamed as Westmoreland; and then at North Bay with the sunrise they had plunged into the wilderness,—into the thousand miles of forest and lake that lie between Old Ontario and Winnipeg.

And here it was that Elizabeth's enthusiasm had become in her brother's eyes a folly; that something wild had stirred in her blood, and sitting there in her shady hat at the rear of the train, her eyes pursuing the great track which her father had helped to bring into being, she shook Europe from her, and felt through her pulses the tremor of one who watches at a birth, and looks forward to a life to be—

‘Dinner is ready, my lady.’

‘Thank Heaven!’ cried Philip Gaddesden, springing up. ‘Get us some champagne, please, Yerkes.’



'Philip!'—said his sister reprovingly, 'it is not good for you to have champagne every night.'

Philip threw back his curly head, and grinned.

'I'll see if I can do without it to-morrow. Come along, Elizabeth.'

They passed through the outer saloon, with its chintz-covered sofas and chairs, past the two little bedrooms of the car, and the tiny kitchen, to the dining-room at the further end. Here stood a man in steward's livery ready to serve, while from the door of the kitchen another older man, thin and tanned, in a cook's white cap and apron, looked benevolently out.

'Smells good, Yerkes!' said Gaddesden as he passed.

The cook nodded.

'If only her ladyship 'll find something she likes,' he said, not without a slight tone of reproach.

'You hear that, Elizabeth?' said her brother as they sat down to the well-spread board.

Elizabeth looked plaintive. It was one of her chief weaknesses to wish to be liked—adored, perhaps, is the better word—by her servants; and she generally accomplished it. But the price of Yerkes's affections was too high.

'It seems to me that we have only just finished luncheon, not to speak of tea,' she said, looking in dismay at the menu before her. 'Phil, do you wish to see me return home like Mrs. Melhuish?'

Phil surveyed his sister. Mrs. Melhuish was the wife of their local clergyman in Hampshire; a poor lady plagued by abnormal weight, and a heart disease.

'You might borrow pounds from Mrs. Melhuish, and nobody would ever know. You really are too thin, Betty,—a perfect scarecrow. Of course Yerkes sees that he could do a lot for you. All the same, that's a pretty gown you've got on—an awfully pretty gown,' he repeated with emphasis, adding immediately afterwards in another tone—'Betty!—I say!—you're not going to wear black any more?'

'No'—said Lady Merton, 'no—I am not going to wear black any more.' The words came lingeringly out, and as the servant removed her plate, Elizabeth turned to look out of window at the endless woods, a shadow on her beautiful eyes.

She was slenderly made, with a small face and head round which the abundant hair was very smoothly and closely wound. The hair was of a delicate brown; the complexion clear, but rather

colourless. Among other young and handsome women, Elizabeth Merton made little effect ; like a fine pencil drawing, she required an attentive eye. The modelling of the features, of the brow, the cheeks, the throat, was singularly refined, though without a touch of severity ; her hands, with their very long and slender fingers, conveyed the same impression. Her dress, though dainty, was simple and inconspicuous, and her movements, light, graceful, self-controlled, seemed to show a person of equable temperament, without any strong emotions. In her light cheerfulness, her perpetual interest in the things about her, she might have reminded a spectator of some of the smaller sea-birds that flit endlessly from wave to wave, for whom the business of life appears to be summed up in flitting and poisoning.

The comparison would have been an inadequate one. But Elizabeth Merton's secrets were not easily known. She could rave of Canada ; she rarely talked of herself. She had married, at the age of nineteen, a young Cavalry officer, Sir Francis Merton, who had died of fever within a year of their wedding, on a small West African expedition for which he had eagerly offered himself. Out of the ten months of their marriage, they had spent four together. Elizabeth was now twenty-seven, and her married life had become to her an insubstantial memory. She had been happy, but in the depths of the mind she knew that she might not have been happy very long. Her husband's piteous death had stamped upon her, indeed, a few sharp memories ; she saw him always,—as the report of a brother officer, present at his funeral, had described him—wrapped in the Flag, and so lowered to his grave, in a desert land. This image effaced everything else ; the weaknesses she knew, and those she had begun to guess at. But at the same time she had not been crushed by the tragedy ; she had often scourged herself in secret for the rapidity with which, after it, life had once more become agreeable to her. She knew that many people thought her incapable of deep feeling. She supposed it must be true. And yet there were moments when a self within herself surprised and startled her ; not so much, as yet, in connection with persons, as with ideas, causes,—oppressions, injustices, helpless suffering ; or, as now, with a new nation, visibly striking its ' being into bounds.'

During her widowhood she had lived much with her mother, and had devoted herself particularly to this only brother, a delicate lad,—lovable, self-indulgent, and provoking—for whom the unquestioning devotion of two women had not been the best of schools.

An attack of rheumatic fever which had seized him on leaving Christchurch had scared both mother and sister. He had recovered, but his health was not yet what it had been ; and as at home it was impossible to keep him from playing golf all day, and bridge all night, the family doctor, in despair, recommended travel, and Elizabeth had offered to take charge of him. It was not an easy task, for although Philip was extremely fond of his sister, as the male head of the family since his father's death, he held strong convictions with regard to the natural supremacy of man, and would probably never 'double Cape Turk.' In another year's time, at the age of four and twenty, he would inherit the family estate, and his mother's guardianship would come to an end. He then intended to be done with petticoat government, and to show these two dear women a thing or two.

The dinner was good, as usual ; in Elizabeth's eyes, monstrously good. There was to her something repellent in such luxurious fare enjoyed by strangers, on this tourist-flight through a country so eloquent of man's hard wrestle with rock and soil, with winter and the wilderness. The blinds of the car towards the next carriage were rigorously closed, that no one might interfere with the privacy of the rich ; but Elizabeth had drawn up the blind beside her, and looked occasionally into the evening, and that endless medley of rock and forest and lake which lay there outside, under the sunset. Once she gazed out upon a great gorge, through which ran a noble river, bathed in crimson light ; on its way, no doubt, to Lake Superior, the vast, crescent-shaped lake she had dreamed of in her schoolroom days, over her geography lessons, and was soon to see with her own eyes. She thought of the unaccompanied beauty of the stream, as it would be when the thunder of the train had gone by, of its distant sources in the wild, and the loneliness of its long, long journey. A little shiver stole upon her, the old tremor of man in presence of a nature not yet tamed to his needs, not yet identified with his feelings, still full therefore of stealthy and hostile powers, creeping unawares upon his life.

'This champagne is not nearly as good as last night,' said Philip discontentedly. 'Yerkes must really try for something better at Winnipeg. When do we arrive ?'

'Oh, some time to-morrow evening.'

'What a blessing we're going to bed !' said the boy, lighting his cigarette. 'You won't be able to bother me about lakes, Betty.'

But he smiled at her as he spoke, and Elizabeth was so enchanted to notice the gradual passing away of the look of illness, the brightening of the eye, and slight filling out of the face, that he might tease her as he pleased.

Within an hour Philip Gaddesden was stretched on a comfortable bed sound asleep. The two servants had made up berths in the dining-room; Elizabeth's maid slept in the saloon. Elizabeth herself, wrapped in a large cloak, sat awhile outside, waiting for the first sight of Lake Superior.

It came at last. A gleam of silver on the left—a line of purple islands,—frowning headlands in front—and out of the interminable shadow of the forests, they swept into a broad moonlight. Over high bridges and the roar of rivers, threading innumerable bays, burrowing through headlands and peninsulas, now hanging over the cold shining of the water, now lost again in the woods, the train sped on its wonderful way. Elizabeth on her platform at its rear was conscious of no other living creature. She seemed to be alone with the night and the vastness of the lake, the awfulness of its black and purple coast. As far as she could see, the trees on its shores were still bare; they had temporarily left the spring behind; the North seemed to have rushed upon her in its terror and desolation. She found herself imagining the storms that sweep the lake in winter, measuring her frail life against the loneliness and boundlessness around her. No sign of man, save in the few lights of these scattered stations; and yet, for long, her main impression was one of exultation in man's power and skill, which bore her on and on, safe, through the conquered wilderness.

Gradually, however, this note of feeling slid down into something much softer and sadder. She became conscious of herself, and her personal life; and little by little her exultation passed into yearning; her eyes grew wet. For she had no one beside her with whom to share these secret thoughts and passions—these fresh contacts with life and nature. Was it always to be so? There was in her a longing, a 'sehnsucht' for she knew not what.

She could marry, of course, if she wished. There was a possibility in front of her, of which she sometimes thought. She thought of it now, wistfully and kindly; but it scarcely availed against the sudden melancholy, the passion of indefinite yearning which had assailed her.

The night began to cloud rapidly. The moonlight died from the lake and the coast. Soon a wind sprang up, lashing the young

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spruce and birch growing among the charred wreck of the older forest, through which the railway had been driven. Elizabeth went within, and she was no sooner in bed than the rain came pelting on her window.

She lay sleepless for a long time, thinking now, not of the world outside, or of herself, but of the long train in front of her, and its freight of lives; especially of the two emigrant cars, full, as she had seen at North Bay, of Galicians and Russian Poles. She remembered the women's faces, and the babies at their breasts. Were they all asleep, tired out perhaps by long journeying, and soothed by the noise of the train? Or were there hearts among them aching for some poor hovel left behind, for a dead child in a Carpathian graveyard?—for a lover?—a father?—some bowed and wrinkled Galician peasant whom the next winter would kill? And were the strong, swarthy men dreaming of wealth, of the broad land waiting, the free country, and the equal laws?

Elizabeth awoke. Broad sunshine in her little room. The train was at a standstill. Winnipeg?

A subtle sense of something wrong stole upon her. Why this murmur of voices round the train? She pushed aside a corner of the blind beside her. Outside a railway cutting, filled with misty rain—many persons walking up and down, and a babel of talk—

Bewildered, she rang for her maid, an elderly and precise person who had accompanied her on many wanderings.

'Simpson, what's the matter? Are we near Winnipeg?'

'We've been standing here for the last two hours, my lady. I've been expecting to hear you ring long ago.'

Simpson's tone implied that her mistress had been somewhat crassly sleeping while more sensitive persons had been awake and suffering.

Elizabeth rubbed her eyes. 'But what's wrong, Simpson, and where are we?'

'Goodness knows, my lady. We're hours away from Winnipeg—that's all I know—and we're likely to stay here, by what Yerkes says.'

'Has there been an accident?'

Simpson replied—sombrely—that something had happened, she didn't know what—that Yerkes put it down to 'the sink-hole,' which according to him was 'always doing it'—that there were two trains

in front of them at a standstill, and trains coming up every minute behind them.

'My dear Simpson!—that must be an exaggeration. There aren't trains every minute on the C.P.R. Is Mr. Philip awake?'

'Not yet, my lady.'

'And what on earth is a sink-hole?' asked Elizabeth.

## CHAPTER II.

ELIZABETH had ample time during the ensuing sixteen hours for inquiry as to the nature of sink-holes.

When she emerged, dressed, into the saloon—she found Yerkes looking out of window in a brown study. He was armed with a dusting brush and a white apron, but it did not seem to her that he had been making much use of them.

'Whatever is the matter, Yerkes? What is a sink-hole?'

Yerkes looked round.

'A sink-hole, my lady?' he said slowly—'A sink-hole, well it's as you may say—a muskeg.'

'A *what*?'

'A place where you can't find no bottom, my lady. This one's a vixen, she is! What she's cost the C.P.R.!'—he threw up his hands. 'And there's no contenting her—the more you give her the more she wants. They give her ten trainloads of stuff a couple of months ago. No good! A bit of moist weather and there she is at it again. Let an engine and two carriages through last night—ten o'clock!'

'Gracious! Was anybody hurt? What—a kind of bog?—a quicksand?'

'Well,' said Yerkes, resuming his dusting, and speaking with polite obstinacy, 'muskegs is what they call 'em in these parts. They'll have to divert the line. I tell 'em so, scores of times. She was at this game last year. Held me up twenty-one hours last fall.'

When Yerkes was travelling he spoke in a representative capacity. He *was* the line.

'How many trains ahead of us are there, Yerkes?'

'Two as I know on,—may be more.'

'And behind?'

'Three or four, my lady.'

'And how long are we likely to be kept?'

'Can't say. They've been at her ten hours. She don't generally let anyone over her under a good twenty—or twenty-four.'

'Yerkes!—what will Mr. Gaddesden say? And it's so damp and horrid.'

Elizabeth looked at the outside prospect in dismay. The rain was drizzling down. The passengers walking up and down the line were in heavy overcoats with their collars turned up. To the left of the line there was a misty glimpse of water over a foreground of charred stumps. On the other side rose a bank of scrubby wood, broken by a patch of clearing, which held a rude log-cabin. What was she to do with Philip all day?

Suddenly a cow appeared on the patch of grass round the log hut. With a sound of jubilation, Yerkes threw down his dusting brush and rushed out of the car. Elizabeth watched him pursue the cow, and disappear round a corner. What on earth was he about?

Philip had apparently not yet been called. He was asleep, and Yerkes had let well alone. But he must soon awake to the situation, and the problem of his entertainment would begin. Elizabeth took up the guide-book, and with difficulty made out that they were about a hundred miles from Winnipeg. Somewhere near Rainy Lake apparently. What a foolishly appropriate name!

'Hi!—hi!—'

The shout startled her. Looking out she saw a group of passengers grinning, and Yerkes running hard for the car, holding something in his hand, and pursued by a man in a slouch hat, who seemed to be swearing. Yerkes dashed into the car, deposited his booty in the kitchen, and standing in the doorway faced the enemy. A terrific babel arose.

Elizabeth appeared in the passage and demanded to know what had happened.

'All right, my lady,' said Yerkes, mopping his forehead. 'I've only been and milked his cow. No saying where I'd have got any milk this side of Winnipeg if I hadn't.'

'But, Yerkes, he doesn't seem to like it.'

'Oh, that's all right, my lady.'

But the settler was now on the steps of the car gesticulating and scolding, in what Elizabeth guessed to be a Scandinavian tongue. He was indeed a gigantic Swede, furiously angry, and Elizabeth had thoughts of bearding him herself and restoring the milk, when some mysterious transaction involving coin passed



suddenly between the two men. The Swede stopped short in the midst of a sentence, pocketed something, and made off sulkily for the log hut. Yerkes, with a smile, and a wink to the bystanders, retired triumphant on his prey.

Elizabeth, standing at the door of the kitchen, inquired if supplies were likely to run short.

'Not in this car,' said Yerkes, with emphasis. 'What *they* 'll do'—a jerk of his thumb towards the rest of the train in front—'can't say.'

'Of course we shall have to give them food!' cried Lady Merton, delighted at the thought of getting rid of some of their superfluities.

Yerkes showed a stolid face.

'The C.P.R. 'll have to feed 'em—must. That's the regulation. Accident—free meals. That hasn't nothing to do with me. They don't come poaching on my ground. I say, look out! Do yer call that bacon, or buffaler steaks?'

And Yerkes rushed upon his subordinate, Bettany, who was cutting the breakfast bacon with undue thickness, and took the thing in hand himself. The crushed Bettany, who was never allowed to finish anything, disappeared hastily in order to answer the electric bell which was ringing madly from Philip Gaddesden's berth.

'Conductor!' cried a voice from the inner platform outside the dining-room and next the train.

'And what might you be wanting, sir?' said Bettany jauntily, opening the door to the visitor. Bettany was a small man, with thin harassed features and a fragment of beard, glib of speech towards everybody but Yerkes.

'Your conductor got some milk, I think, from that cabin.'

'He did,—but only enough for ourselves. Sorry we can't oblige you.'

'All the same, I am going to beg some of it. May I speak to the gentleman?'

'Mr. Gaddesden, sir, is dressing. The steward will attend to you.'

And Bettany retired ceremoniously in favour of Yerkes, who hearing voices had come out of his den.

'I have come to ask for some fresh milk for a baby in the emigrant car,' said the stranger. 'Looks sick, and the mother's

been crying. They've only got tinned milk in the restaurant, and the child won't touch it.'

'Very sorry it's that particular, sir. But I've got only what I want.'

'Yerkes!' cried Elizabeth Merton, in the background. 'Of course the baby must have it. Give it to the gentleman, please, at once.'

The stranger removed his hat and stepped into the tiny dining-room where Elizabeth was standing. He was tall and fair-skinned, with a blonde moustache, and very blue eyes. He spoke—for an English ear—with the slight accent which on the Canadian side of the border still proclaims the neighbourhood of the States.

'I am sorry to trouble you, madam,' he said, with deference. 'But the child seems very weakly, and the mother herself has nothing to give it. It was the conductor of the restaurant car who sent me here.'

'We shall be delighted,' said Lady Merton eagerly. 'May I come with you, if you are going to take it? Perhaps I could do something for the mother.'

The stranger hesitated a moment.

'An emigrant car full of Galicians is rather a rough sort of place—especially at this early hour in the morning. But if you don't mind—'

'I don't mind anything. Yerkes, is that *all* the milk?'

'All to speak of, my lady,' said Yerkes, nimbly retreating into his den.

Elizabeth shook her head as she looked at the milk. But her visitor laughed.

'The baby won't get through that to-day. It's a regular little scarecrow. I shouldn't think the mother 'll rear it.'

They stepped out on to the line. The drizzle descended on Lady Merton's bare head, and grey travelling dress.

'You ought to have an umbrella,' said the Canadian, looking at her in some embarrassment. And he ran back to the car for one. Then, while she carried the milk carefully in both hands, he held the umbrella over her, and they passed through the groups of passengers who were strolling disconsolately up and down the line in spite of the wet, or exchanging lamentations with others from two more stranded trains, one drawn up alongside, the other behind.

Many glances were levelled at the slight Englishwoman, with the

delicately pale face, and at the man escorting her. Elizabeth meanwhile was putting questions. How long would they be detained? Her brother with whom she was travelling was not at all strong. Unconsciously, perhaps, her voice took a note of complaint.

'Well, we can't any of us cross—can we?—till they come to some bottom in the sink-hole,' said the Canadian, interrupting her a trifle bluntly.

Elizabeth laughed. 'We may be here then till night.'

'Possibly. But you'll be the first over.'

'How? There are some trains in front.'

'That doesn't matter. They'll move you up. They're very vexed it should have happened to you.'

Elizabeth felt a trifle uncomfortable. Was the dear young man tilting at the idle rich—and the corrupt Old World? She stole a glance at him, but perceived only that in his own tanned and sunburnt way he was a remarkably handsome well-made fellow, built on a rather larger scale than the Canadians she had so far seen. A farmer? His manners were not countrified. But a farmer in Canada or the States may be of all social grades.

By this time they had reached the emigrant car, the conductor of which was standing on the steps. He was loth to allow Lady Merton to enter, but Elizabeth persisted. Her companion led the way, pushing through a smoking group of dark-faced men hanging round the entrance.

Inside, the car was thick, indeed, with smoke and heavy with the exhalations of the night. Men and women were sitting on the wooden benches; some women were cooking in the tiny stove-room attached to the car; children, half naked and unwashed, were playing on the floor; here and there a man was still asleep; while one old man was painfully conning a paper of 'Homestead Regulations' which had been given him at Montreal, a lad of eighteen helping him; and close by another lad was writing a letter, his eyes passing dreamily from the paper to the Canadian landscape outside, of which he was clearly not conscious. In a corner, surrounded by three or four other women, was the mother they had come to seek. She held a wailing baby of about a year old in her arms. At the sight of Elizabeth, the child stopped its wailing, and lay breathing fast and feebly, its large bright eyes fixed on the new-comer. The mother turned away abruptly. It was not unusual for persons from the parlour-cars to ask leave to walk through the emigrants.

But Elizabeth's companion said a few words to her, apparently in Russian, and Elizabeth, stooping over her, held out the milk. Then a dark face reluctantly showed itself, and great black eyes, in deep, lined sockets; eyes rather of a race than of a person, hardly conscious, hardly individualised, yet most poignant, expressing some feeling, remote and inarticulate, that roused Elizabeth's. She called to the conductor for a cup and a spoon; she made her way into the malodorous kitchen, and got some warm water and sugar; then kneeling by the child, she put a spoonful of the diluted and sweetened milk into the mother's hand.

‘Was it foolish of me to offer her that money?’ said Elizabeth with flushed cheeks as they walked back through the rain. ‘They looked so terribly poor.’

The Canadian smiled.

‘I daresay it didn't do any harm,’ he said indulgently. ‘But they are probably not poor at all. The Galicians generally bring in quite a fair sum. And after a year or two they begin to be rich. They never spend a farthing they can help. It costs money—or time—to be clean, so they remain dirty. Perhaps we shall teach them—after a bit.’

His companion looked at him with a shy but friendly curiosity.

‘How did you come to know Russian?’

‘When I was a child there were some Russian Poles on the next farm to us. I used to play with the boys, and learnt a little. The conductor called me in this morning to interpret. These people come from the Russian side of the Carpathians.’

‘Then you are a Canadian yourself?—from the West?’

‘I was born in Manitoba.’

‘I am quite in love with your country!’

Elizabeth paused beside the steps leading to their car. As she spoke, her brown eyes lit up, and all her small features ran over, suddenly, with life and charm.

‘Yes, it's a good country,’ said the Canadian, rather drily. ‘It's going to be a great country. Is this your first visit?’

But the conversation was interrupted by a reproachful appeal from Yerkes.

‘Breakfast, my lady, has been hotted twice.’

The Canadian looked at Elizabeth curiously, lifted his hat, and went away.

'Well, if this doesn't take the cake!' said Philip Gaddesden, throwing himself disconsolately into an armchair. 'I bet you, Elizabeth, we shall be here forty-eight hours. And this damp goes through one.'

The young man shivered, as he looked petulantly out through the open doorway of the car to the wet woods beyond. Elizabeth surveyed him with some anxiety. Like herself he was small, and lightly built. But his features were much less regular than hers; the chin and nose were childishly tilted, the eyes too prominent. His bright colour, however,—(mother and sister could well have dispensed with that touch of vivid red on the cheeks!)—his curly hair, and his boyish ways made him personally attractive; while in his moments of physical weakness, his evident resentment of Nature's treatment of him, and angry determination to get the best of her, had a touch of something that was pathetic—that appealed.

Elizabeth brought a rug and wrapped round him. But she did not try to console him; she looked round for something or someone to amuse him.

On the line, just beyond the railed platform of the car, a group of men were lounging and smoking. One of them was her acquaintance of the morning. Elizabeth, standing on the platform, waited till he turned in her direction—caught his eye, and beckoned. He came with alacrity. She stooped over the rail to speak to him.

'I'm afraid you'll think it very absurd,'—her shy smile broke again—'but—do you think there's anyone in this train who plays bridge?'

He laughed.

'Certainly. There is a game going on at this moment in the car behind you.'

'Is it—is it anybody—we could ask to luncheon?—who'd come, I mean,' she added, hurriedly.

'I should think they'd come—I should think they'd be glad. Your cook, Yerkes, is famous on the line. I know two of the people playing. They are Members of Parliament.'

'Oh! then perhaps I know them too,' cried Elizabeth, brightening.

He laughed again.

'The Dominion Parliament, I mean.' He named two towns in Manitoba, while Lady Merton's pink flush showed her conscious of having betrayed her English insularity. 'Shall I introduce you?'

'Please!—if you find an opportunity. It's for my brother. He's recovering from an illness.'

'And you want to cheer him up. Of course. Well, he'll want it to-day.' The young man looked round him, at the line strewn with unsightly débris, the ugly cutting which blocked the view, and the mists up-curling from the woods; then at the slight figure beside him. The corners of his mouth tried not to laugh. 'I am afraid you are not going to like Canada, if it treats you like this.'

'I've liked every minute of it up till now,' said Elizabeth warmly. 'Can you tell me—I should so like to know!—who all these people are?' She waved her hand towards the groups walking up and down.

'Well!—not all—'

The Canadian's broad and sudden smile seemed so disproportionate to the occasion, that Elizabeth could only suppose that it somehow applied to her remarks in general, herself and her situation. It seemed she excited the young man's sense of the absurd. But how?

He hurried on, composing his face quickly as though he divined her.

'Some of them are tourists like yourselves. But I know a few of them. That man in the clerical coat, and the round collar, is Father Henty,—a Jesuit well known in Winnipeg—a great man among the Catholics here.'

'But a disappointed one,' said Lady Merton.

The Canadian looked surprised. Elizabeth, proud of her knowledge, went on—

'Isn't it true the Catholics hoped to conquer the North-West,—and so—with Quebec—to govern you all? And now the English and American immigration has spoilt all their chances—poor things!'

'That's about it. Did they tell you that in Toronto?'

Elizabeth stiffened. The slight persistent tone of mockery in the young man's voice was beginning to offend her.

'And the others?' she said, without noticing his question.

It was the Canadian's turn to redden. He changed his tone.

'—The man next him is a professor at the Manitoba University. The gentleman in the brown suit is going to Vancouver to look after some big lumber leases he took out last year. And that little man in the Panama hat has been keeping us all alive. He's been prospecting for silver in New Ontario—thinks he's going to make his fortune in a week.'

'Oh, but that will do exactly for my brother!' cried Elizabeth, delighted. 'Please introduce us.'

And hurrying back into the car she burst upon the discontented gentleman within. Philip, who was just about to sally forth into the damp, against the entreaties of his servant, and take his turn at shying stones at a bottle on the line, was appeased by her report, and was soon seated, talking toy speculation, with a bronzed and brawny person, who watched the young Englishman, as they chatted, out of a pair of humorous eyes. Philip believed himself a great financier, but was not in truth either very shrewd or very daring, and his various coups or losses generally left his exchequer at the end of the year pretty much what it had been the year before. But the stranger, who seemed to have staked out claims at one time or another, across the whole face of the continent, from Klondyke to Nova Scotia, kept up a mining talk that held him enthralled; and Elizabeth breathed freely.

She returned to the platform. The scene was *triste*, but the rain had for the moment stopped. She hailed an official passing by, and asked if there was any chance of their soon going on. The man smiled and shook his head.

Her Canadian acquaintance, who was standing near, came up to the car as he heard her question.

'I have just seen a divisional superintendent. We may get on about nine o'clock to-night.'

'And it is now eleven o'clock in the morning,' sighed Lady Merton. 'Well!—I think a little exercise would be a good thing.'

And she descended the steps of the car. The Canadian hesitated.

'Would you allow me to walk with you?' he said, with formality. 'I might perhaps be able to tell you a few things. I belong to the railway.'

'I shall be greatly obliged,' said Elizabeth, cordially. 'Do you mean that you are an official?'

'I am an engineer—in charge of some construction work in the Rockies.'

Lady Merton's face brightened.

'Indeed! I think that must be one of the most interesting things in the world to be.'

The Canadian's eyebrows lifted a little.

'Do you?' he said, evidently rather puzzled. 'Well, it's not bad—but I've done things a good deal livelier in my time.'

'You've not always been an engineer?'

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'Very few people are always "anything" in Canada, he said, laughing. 'It's like the States. One tries a lot of things. Oh, I was trained as an engineer—at Montreal. But directly I had finished with that I went off to Klondyke. I made a bit of money—came back—and lost it all, in a milling business—over there'—he pointed eastwards—'on the Lake of the Woods. My partner cheated me. Then I went exploring to the north, and took a Government job at the same time—paying treaty money to the Indians. Then, five years ago, I got work for the C.P.R. But I shall cut it before long. I've saved some money again. I shall take up land, and go into politics.

'Politics?' repeated Elizabeth, wishing she might some day know what politics meant in Canada. 'You're not married?' she added pleasantly.

'I am not married.'

'And may I ask your name?'

His name, it seemed, was George Anderson, and presently as they walked up and down he became somewhat communicative about himself, though always within the limits, as it seemed to her, of a natural dignity, which developed indeed as their acquaintance progressed. He told her tales, especially, of his Indian journeys through the wilds about the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers, in search of remote Indian settlements—that the word of England to the red man might be kept; and his graphic talk called up before her the vision of a northern wilderness, even wilder and remoter than that she had just passed through, where yet the earth teemed with lakes and timber and trout-bearing streams, and where—'we shall grow corn some day,' as he presently informed her. 'In twenty years they will have developed seed that will ripen three weeks earlier than wheat does now in Manitoba. Then we shall settle that country—right away!—to the far north.' His tone stirred and deepened. A little while before, it had seemed to her that her tourist enthusiasm amused him. Yet by flashes, she began to feel in him something, beside which her own raptures fell silent. Had she, after all, hit upon a man—a practical man—who was yet conscious of the romance of Canada?

Presently she asked him if there was no one dependent on him—no mother?—or sisters?

'I have two brothers—in the Government service at Ottawa. I had four sisters.'

'Are they married?'

'They are dead,' he said, slowly. 'They and my mother were burnt to death.'

She exclaimed. Her brown eyes turned upon him—all sudden horror and compassion.

'It was a farmhouse where we were living—and it took fire. Mother and sisters had no time to escape. It was early morning. I was a boy of eighteen, and was out on the farm doing my chores. When I saw the smoke and came back, the house was a burning mass, and—it was all over.'

'Where was your father?'

'My father is dead.'

'But he was there—at the time of the fire?'

'Yes. He was there.'

He had suddenly ceased to be communicative, and she instinctively asked no more questions, except as to the cause of the conflagration.

'Probably an explosion of coal-oil. It was sometimes used to light the fire with in the morning.'

'How very, very terrible!' she said gently, after a moment, as though she felt it. 'Did you stay on at the farm?'

'I brought up my two brothers. They were on a visit to some neighbours at the time of the fire. We stayed on three years.'

'With your father?'

'No; we three alone.'

She felt vaguely puzzled; but before she could turn to another subject, he had added—

'There was nothing else for us to do. We had no money and no relations—nothing but the land. So we had to work it—and we managed. But after three years we'd saved a little money, and we wanted to get a bit more education. So we sold the land and moved up to Montreal.'

'How old were the brothers when you took on the farm?'

'Thirteen—and fifteen.'

'Wonderful!' she exclaimed. 'You must be proud.'

He laughed out.

'Why, that kind of thing's done every day in this country! You can't idle in Canada.'

They had turned back towards the train. In the doorway of the car, sat Philip Gaddesden lounging and smoking, enveloped in a fur coat, his knees covered with a magnificent fur rug. A whisky and soda had just been placed at his right hand.

Elizabeth thought—'He said that because he had seen Philip.' But when she looked at him, she withdrew her supposition. His eyes were not on the car, and he was evidently thinking of something else.

'I hope your brother will take no harm,' he said to her, as they approached the car. 'Can I be of any service to you in Winnipeg?'

'Oh, thank you. We have some introductions——'

'Of course. But if I can—let me know.'

An official came along the line, with a packet in his hand. At sight of Elizabeth he stopped and raised his hat.

'Am I speaking to Lady Merton? I have some letters here, that have been waiting for you at Winnipeg, and they've sent them out to you.'

He placed the packet in her hand. The Canadian moved away, but not before Elizabeth had seen again the veiled amusement in his eyes. It seemed to him comic, no doubt, that the idlers of the world should be so royally treated. But after all—she drew herself up—her father had been no idler.

She hastened to her brother; and they fell upon their letters.

'Oh, Philip!'—she said presently, looking up—'Philip! Arthur Delaine meets us at Winnipeg.'

'Does he? Does he?' repeated the young man, laughing. 'I say, Betty!——'

Elizabeth took no notice of her brother's teasing tone. Nor did her voice, as she proceeded to read him the letter she held in her hand, throw any light upon her own feelings with regard to it.

The weary day passed. The emigrants were consoled by free meals; and the delicate baby thrived on the Swede's ravished milk. For the rest, the people in the various trains made rapid acquaintance with each other; bridge went merrily in more than one car, and the general inconvenience was borne with much philosophy, even by Philip Gaddesden. At last, when darkness had long fallen, the train to which the private car was attached moved slowly forward amid the cheers of the bystanders.

Elizabeth and her brother were on the observation platform, with the Canadian, whom with some difficulty they had persuaded to share their dinner.

'I told you'—said Anderson—'that you would be passed over

first.' He pointed to two other trains in front that had been shunted to make room for them.

Elizabeth turned to him a little proudly.

'But I should like to say—it's not for our own sakes—not in the least!—it is for my father, that they are so polite to us.'

'I know—of course I know!' was the quick response. 'I have been talking to some of our staff,' he went on, smiling. 'They would do anything for you. Perhaps you don't understand. You are the guests of the railway. And I too belong to the railway. I am a very humble person, but——'

'You also would do anything for us?' asked Elizabeth, with her soft laugh. 'How kind you all are!'

She looked charming as she said it,—her face and head lit up by the line of flaring lights through which they were slowly passing. The line was crowded with dark-faced navvies, watching the passage of the train as it crept forward.

One of the officials in command leapt up on the platform of the car, and introduced himself. He was worn out with the day's labour, but triumphant. 'It's all right now—but, my word! the stuff we've thrown in!'——

He and Anderson began some rapid technical talk. Slowly, they passed over the quicksand which in the morning had engulfed half a train; amid the flare of torches, and the murmur of strange speech, from the Galician and Italian labourers, who rested on their picks and stared and laughed, as they went safely by.

'How I love adventures!' cried Elizabeth, clasping her hands.

'Even little ones?' said the Canadian, smiling. But this time she was not conscious of any note of irony in his manner, rather of a kind protectingness,—more pronounced, perhaps, than it would have been in an Englishman, at the same stage of acquaintance. But Elizabeth liked it; she liked, too, the fine bare head that the torchlight revealed; and the general impression of varied life that the man's personality produced upon her. Her sympathies, her imagination were all trembling towards the Canadians, no less than towards their country.

*(To be continued.)*

# THE ADMIRAL'S GHOST.<sup>1</sup>

I TELL you a tale to-night  
 Which a seaman told to me,  
 With eyes that gleamed in the lanthorn light  
 And a voice as low as the sea.  
 You could almost hear the stars  
 Twinkling up in the sky,  
 And the old wind woke and moaned in the spars  
 And the same old waves went by,  
 Singing the same old song  
 As ages and ages ago,  
 While he froze my blood in that deep-sea night  
 With the things that he seemed to know.  
 A bare foot pattered on deck ;  
 Ropes creaked ; then—all grew still,  
 And he pointed his finger straight in my face  
 And growled, as a sea-dog will.  
 ' Do 'ee know who Nelson was ?  
 That pore little shrivelled form  
 With the patch on his eye and the pinned-up sleeve  
 And a soul like a North Sea storm ?  
 ' Ask of the Devonshire men !  
 They know, and they'll tell you true ;  
 He wasn't the pore little chawed-up chap  
 That Hardy thought he knew.  
 ' He wasn't the man you think !  
 His patch was a dern disguise !  
 For he knew that they'd find him out, d'you see,  
 If they looked him in both his eyes.  
 ' He was twice as big as he seemed ;  
 But his clothes were cunningly made.  
 He'd both of his hairy arms all right !  
 The sleeve was a trick of the trade.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1909, by Alfred Noyes, in the United States of America

' You've heard of sperrits, no doubt ;  
 Well, there's more in the matter than that !  
 But he wasn't the patch and he wasn't the sleeve,  
 And he wasn't the laced cocked-hat.

' *Nelson was just—a ghost !*  
 You may laugh ! But the Devonshire men  
 They knew that he'd come when England called,  
 And they know that he'll come again.

' I'll tell you the way it was  
 (For none of the landsmen know),  
 And to tell it you right, you must go a-starn  
 Two hundred years or so.

\* \* \* \* \*

' The waves were lapping and slapping  
 The same as they are to-day ;  
 And Drake lay dying aboard his ship  
 In Nombre Dios Bay.

' The scent of the foreign flowers  
 Came floating all around ;  
 " But I'd give my soul for the smell o' the pitch,"  
 Says he, " in Plymouth Sound.

" " What shall I do," he says,  
 " When the guns begin to roar,  
 An' England wants me, and me not there  
 To shatter 'er foes once more ? "

' (You've heard what he said, maybe,  
 But I'll mark you the p'int's again ;  
 For I want you to box your compass right  
 And get my story plain.)

" " You must take my drum," he says,  
 " To the old sea-wall at home ;  
 And if ever you strike that drum," he says,  
 " Why, strike me blind, I'll come !

" If England needs me, dead  
 Or living, I'll rise that day !  
 I'll rise from the darkness under the sea  
 Ten thousand miles away."

. That's what he said ; and he died ;  
An' his pirates, listenin' roun',  
With their crimson doublets and jewelled swords  
That flashed as the sun went down.

' They sewed him up in his shroud  
With a round-shot top and toe,  
To sink him under the salt sharp sea  
Where all good seamen go.

' They lowered him down in the deep,  
And there in the sunset light,  
They boomed a broadside over his grave  
As meanin' to say " Good-night."

' They sailed away in the dark  
To the dear little isle they knew ;  
And they hung his drum by the old sea-wall  
The same as he told them to.

\* \* \* \* \*

' Two hundred years went by,  
And the guns began to roar,  
And England was fighting hard for her life,  
As ever she fought of yore.

" " It's only my dead that count,"  
She said, as she says to-day ;  
" It isn't the ships and it isn't the guns  
'Ull sweep Trafalgar's Bay."

' D'you guess who Nelson was ?  
You may laugh, but it's true as true !  
There was more in that pore little chawed-up chap  
Than ever his best friend knew.

' The foe was creepin' close,  
In the dark, to our white-cliffed isle ;  
They were ready to leap at England's throat,  
When—O, you may smile, you may smile ;

' But—ask of the Devonshire men ;  
For they heard in the dead of night  
The roll of a drum, and they saw *him* pass  
On a ship all shining white.



'He stretched out his dead cold face  
And he sailed in the grand old way !  
The fishes had taken an eye and an arm  
But—he swept Trafalgar's Bay.

'Nelson—was Francis Drake !  
O, what matters the uniform,  
Or the patch on your eye or your pinned-up sleeve,  
If your soul's like a North Sea storm ?'

ALFRED NOYES.

*STEVENSON AND SIMONEAU.*

APART from Samoa and the region of his birth, there is, perhaps, no place where the memory of Robert Louis Stevenson is cherished with greater reverence than in California. There are even many Californians who, with that keen and jealous pride in the achievements of those that are born or dwell within the borders of the Golden State, are loth to admit that the cosmopolitan Stevenson was not in all essentials of spirit and genius a true Californian. The chief public monument erected to his memory stands in Portsmouth Square in San Francisco, a tall plinth of granite on which is chiselled his famous Credo. The stone is surmounted by a bronze galleon in full sail, the work of two talented San Franciscans, who also designed the memorial for the grave at Vailima.

The places in California most closely associated with Stevenson are all well known to the writer. In years past many arduous pilgrimages have been made by him to the site of the cabin occupied by Stevenson and his family on Mount Saint Helena, near the vine-embowered town of Calistoga, and he has wandered amidst the mournful ruins of the forgotten mining camp of Silverado—which has acquired so fixed and posthumous a life and fame in his 'Silverado Squatters.' The haunts of Stevenson at Monterey, endeared to all lovers of the man and his works, have been the scene of many outings. With a particular poignancy of regret the San Franciscans recall a tiny, shabby coffee-house on Pine Street in this city, which Stevenson was wont to frequent in his days of loneliness and penury. Afterwards it grew locally as famous in the name of Stevenson as in London 'The Cheshire Cheese' in the name of Johnson. In this coffee-house there was a simple chair, known as Stevenson's, which always stood before the table in the particular obscure corner which he preferred. The journalists and artists who lived and laboured in this part of the city, so close to the exotic Chinatown and the picturesque Latin Quarter, were always contending for the honour of occupying this chair. This little, historic coffee-house has now been swept away with so many other cherished places in the holocaust of 1906. Not far distant lay Portsmouth Square, a public park on whose benches

Stevenson often rested in sad meditation, or seized upon some longshoreman, sailor, tramp, gambler, opium-fiend, or picaroon of the Pacific. As the sad, grey vistas of his enigmatic future stretched before the lonely man sitting in the sunshine of the joyous city, he would draw solace and strength, even delight, from a little volume he had found on some old book-stall—the 'Enchiridion' of William Penn.

Slowly and painfully, sharing the discomforts and privations of the poorest immigrants on the rude, transcontinental trains making the weary journey from New York to San Francisco, the gentle and ailing Tusitala came to California. So broken in health was he when he reached San Francisco on August 30, 1879, that he immediately sought out some solitude of nature, in which he might either recover or die. Yielding to this longing for the hills, he left for the Coast Range Mountains to the east of Monterey. Here he lived in the open, but with disastrous results, and might, indeed, have perished but for the kind ministrations of two goat-herds and a bear hunter. These men nursed him back to strength at their humble ranch. Soon after he left for Monterey, a romantic, somnolent, half-forgotten Mexican town on a bay whose magnificent arc is almost as perfect and unbroken as that of Naples. This town, ancient as history is reckoned in California, lies some one hundred and forty miles south of San Francisco, and was once the capital of California. A place more idyllic, more steeped in the romantic and the picturesquely foreign so dear to Stevenson's heart, could not have been found by him in all the State. And but last year there died at Monterey an old man between whom and Stevenson a beautiful and lasting attachment had grown up in the brief three months of their association.

Both Monterey and the strange character of Jules Simoneau forthwith exercised upon him a potent fascination. In Stevenson's day Monterey was a forlorn and neglected place, the sea-sands of the Pacific blowing through its chaotic and unlighted streets, partly covered with planks of pine, splintered and thrusting forth ugly spikes. The houses were of the ancient style of *adobe* architecture introduced by the Spanish missionaries, and their walls of unfired brick were thick as the bastions of a fortress.

Curiously Stevenson looked on the lazy life about the saloons, the gambling, the Mexican horses and their trappings of ornamented leather and silver. 'It struck me oddly,' he writes, 'to come across some of the *Cornhill* illustrations to Mr. Blackmore's

"Erema," and see all the characters astride on English saddles. As a matter of fact, an English saddle is a rarity even in San Francisco, and you may say, a thing unknown in all the rest of California. In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles but true Vaquero riding—men always at the hand-gallop up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corner, urging their horses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotatory spurs, checking them dead with a touch, or wheeling them right-about-face in a square yard.'

He was surprised to find how much the inhabitants, partly Spanish, Mexican, and Indian, differed from the American type, and was gratified to discover, 'in a world of absolutely mannerless Americans, a people full of deportment, solemnly courteous, and doing all things with grace and decorum. In dress they ran to colour and bright sashes. Not even the most Americanised could always resist the temptation to stick a red rose into his hat-band. Not even the most Americanised would descend to wear the vile dress hat of civilisation. Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. . . . Night after night serenaders would be going about the streets, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voices together, sometimes severally, each guitar before a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth-century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of those old, heart-breaking Spanish love songs mount into the night air, perhaps in a deep baritone, perhaps in that high-pitched, pathetic womanish alto which is so common among Mexican men, and which strikes on the unaccustomed ear as something not entirely human, but altogether sad.'

But in the Monterey of to-day the appealing human memories cling most persistently about Stevenson's name in relation to old Jules Simoneau, the keeper of a restaurant to which Stevenson paid this towering tribute :

Of all my private collections of remembered inns and restaurants—and I believe it, other things being equal, to be unrivalled—one particular house of entertainment stands forth alone. I am grateful, indeed, to many a swinging signboard, to many a rusty wine bush, but not with the same kind of gratitude. Some were beautifully situated, some had an admirable table, some were the gathering-places of excellent companions ; but, take them all in all, not one can be compared with Simoneau's at Monterey.

Vivid, too, is his description of the place in the following passage : ' To the front, it was part barber's shop, part bar ; to the

back, there was a kitchen and a *salle-à-manger*. The intending diner found himself in a little, chill, bare, *adobe* room, furnished with chairs and tables, and adorned with some oil sketches roughly brushed upon the wall in the manner of Barbizon and Cernay. The table, at whatever hour you entered, was already laid with a not spotless napkin, and by way of *épergne*, with a dish of green peppers and tomatoes, pleasing alike to eye and palate. If you staid there to meditate before a meal, you would hear Simoneau all about the kitchen, and rattling among the dishes.'

Unfortunately, Stevenson gave us no complete portrait of this kind and generous man, the delectable Simoneau. Nevertheless, the local fame and interest which the distinguished writer left his host as a remembrance and a legacy, have been the means of preserving for us a personality as simple, lovable, and noble as that of Stevenson himself. Last year Simoneau died at the age of eighty-eight. He was a remarkable and original character, whose own intrinsic brightness has too long been dimmed by the illustrious name of the man who called him friend. Of late some San Franciscan journalist or other would produce a few paragraphs in a newspaper calling attention to the old man's increasing poverty and age, and utter an appeal on his behalf, which always brought Simoneau a few urgently needed dollars.

'Jules Simoneau, a jolly old Frenchman,' as Stevenson described him, 'the stranded fifty-eight-year-old-wreck of a good-hearted, dissipated, and once wealthy Nantais tradesman,' was a man of reading and culture. He had been a student at the University of Rennes, in France, and it was thus that Stevenson was able with this simple though never menial restaurateur to sound the seas of philosophy and literature within those humble *adobe* walls and in Simoneau's cottage. Simoneau had chanced upon Stevenson while the latter was ill and lonely and helplessly confined to his bed. He was also in danger of starvation. The old Frenchman at once devoted himself to the sick writer, nursed him tenderly, and brought him every day the choicest tit-bits and morsels from his bill-of-fare. It was food cooked with Gallic refinement, art, and piquancy.

When Stevenson recovered, he naturally became a patron of this little restaurant of wanderers and Bohemians on the shores of that 'Homeric deep,' the Pacific. It soon became a haunt for painters and poets whom the glamour of Monterey lured from afar. Little it mattered to the generous host whether these sons of

genius had money or not. They were ever welcome, in particular, Stevenson, for a meal, a talk, a game of chess, or a solo on the flute.

Stevenson and Simoneau saw each other only for three months but in their daily and devoted intercourse, a life-long friendship was forged. After Tusitala left Monterey, affectionate letters passed between them for many years, and all of Stevenson's were jealously treasured by the old Frenchman. To his visitors he would at times reveal the crumpled sheets, and call attention to the tender and loving words of his one-time guest. 'Mon cher and bon ami, Simoneau,' was the usual mode of address.

It is with a real joy that I find myself able to assure you that I shall never forget you, and that your good friendship and all our happy days together are and will be forever cherished in my memory.

so closed one letter, and another thus :

From the bottom of my heart, dear and kind old man, I hold your good memory very close, and I will guard it till death. If there was one man who was good to me, that man was Jules Simoneau.

Simoneau possessed a rare and valuable set of Stevenson's works, nearly all of them inscribed by the author. These books were eagerly coveted by collectors and Stevenson enthusiasts who plied the old man with tempting offers. But when these bibliophiles offered their gold for his precious relics, Simoneau would often draw forth his copy of 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' and point to the inscription on the fly-leaf. 'But the case of Robert Louis Stevenson and Jules Simoneau, if one forgot the other, would be stranger still.' And that was very often the only answer the old Frenchman deigned to give. Mrs. Stevenson, who still lives in San Francisco, has frequently remarked that her distinguished husband seldom spoke of Simoneau without tears starting to his eyes.

In the twenty-nine years that ensued since Stevenson sat and talked in the poor and unpretentious restaurant of the 'derelict old Nantais tradesman' on the shores of Monterey Bay, many further vicissitudes befell that kind and amiable soul. When he was no longer able to continue his business of restaurant-keeper, and he who had fed so many was himself in danger of suffering want and hunger, the aged man began to peddle *tamales* on the street. These Mexican delicacies, formed of a mixture of maize

minced meat, olives, and Spanish peppers and wrapped in successive layers of the husks of Indian corn, have long been a native dish in California. Simoneau's Mexican wife, a faithful and industrious woman, was most skilled in making these *tamales*. Like some ancient and benign old patriarch, Simoneau, crippled now and bowed, would stand beside his basket or small steam-kettle, with a smile and kindly word for all, and an indestructible cheerfulness in his heart.

Three years ago Jules Simoneau grew too frail and old to fare forth into the streets any longer. So he became a philosophic eremite, seldom leaving the tiny cottage where he lived with his dark-skinned wife, his married daughter, and their children. He would sit for hours in the parlour window, gazing now into his sunlit garden, now at his hoard of precious volumes arrayed in a flimsy bamboo book-case. To Simoneau these finally grew to be almost like the veritable presence of Tusitala himself. There came to him many visitors to talk of Stevenson, some to tempt him with huge prices for his books. One person offered him two thousand dollars for the set, another one hundred dollars for the little pamphlet in defence of Father Damien. But always old Jules Simoneau would shake his head and repeat that the books were not for sale at any price.

Attired in ancient corduroy, his shirt the blue flannel of the Californian miner or French peasant, a red bandanna scarfed about his neck, and a battered felt hat covering his long grey hair, he sat there, patient and uncomplaining, ever ready to speak of the halcyonic past and of his beloved *bon ami*. His long white beard, curling and untrimmed, his wrinkled face, his beetling brows hedged with long and shaggy hair overarching the mild and sympathetic blue eyes, the large, shapely nose and the refined and mobile mouth, made him a striking figure.

Charles Warren Stoddard, whose death at Monterey has just been announced as these lines are written, was one of Stevenson's few friends in San Francisco. His 'South Sea Idylls,' which Stevenson so admired, first lured the latter's fancy to play upon the magic of the islands which ultimately drew him to the South Pacific. Stoddard also dwelt in Monterey and knew Simoneau well. Last year the present writer received from him a small photograph showing Stoddard grey, but hale, seated in the sun on the steps of Simoneau's rose-covered cottage. Within the door, under the porch, Simoneau himself was dimly visible. 'In the parlour,'

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Stoddard wrote on the back of the print, 'the old Spanish wife of Simoneau is dying.'

Simoneau himself lingered but some seven months longer, painfully hobbling about the house on a clumsy crutch. Poverty sat heavily upon the tiny household, but the collection of books in the decrepit case remained intact. As the year 1908 grew to its close, by the still Pacific, the gentle Simoneau, the host and benefactor of Stevenson, faithful to the friend of his heart, and still cherishing the old remembrances, passed quietly away.

HERMAN SCHEFFAUER.

## THE DISBANDING OF THE GUAVA RIFLES.<sup>1</sup>

THE Adjutant managed to convert a sigh of relief into a deferential cough as he blotted the Colonel's signature at the foot of the 'Weekly State,' and murmured: 'That's all my papers for to-day, sir. Will you polish off the Quartermaster now? He's lying low in his booth, waiting to be sent for.'

The Colonel groaned. 'All right, I suppose I must. But just look here, Annesley: none of your sloping off and leaving me to cope with the fellow single-handed! He's always starting some confounded hare or other, and in this stuffy weather I can make no fight of it.'

Everybody remembers what a favourable impression the detachment of the Guava Rifles created at the Diamond Jubilee; and soldiers will recall that the corps enjoyed a high reputation for discipline as long as the rank and file got their own way, and that there was never any question as regards the martial qualities of the *personnel* provided that the authorities did not fall into the error of sending the regiment on active service. An orderly—a picturesque and soldierly figure in his turban and snowy spats—was despatched in hot haste to the Quartermaster's office to intimate to that functionary that the Commanding Officer was awaiting his pleasure, and the Adjutant proffered a lighted match to his Chief, who had extracted a cigarette out of a drawer marked 'Confidential Documents.' The mornings are apt to grow sultry even so early in the year as April in San Jago, that sugar island in the Antilles which was filched from its previous possessors by the machinations of Pitt, and the most perfectly appointed orderly-room under such conditions loses some of its undefinable charm. The Adjutant was anon going home on long leave; the Colonel, on the other hand, saw

<sup>1</sup> This tale is founded upon what the writer believes to be a true story. It used to be told in the old War Office in Pall Mall a few years ago, and concerned a certain file of correspondence which began with some question about buttons and which ended with the disbanding of a battalion. Although the whole establishment has been reorganised since that time in consequence of the recommendations of the Committee presided over by Lord Esher, the War Office has ever been a conservative institution, and its methods remain substantially the same as they were before the proposals of that Committee were given effect to. The story has been adapted to the conditions now existing.

no prospects of a change of scene for many months to come, and it was with something of an effort that he managed to infuse some little geniality into his greeting of the Quartermaster : ' Ah, Prout ! Good morning ; bit warm, isn't it ? Got some papers, I see. But,' suspiciously, ' what's that you've got in that brown paper parcel ? '

' With your permission, sir, I propose to put the ordinary correspondence before you first,' replied the Quartermaster respectfully but firmly, as he deposited the parcel on a chair and then laid the first out of a handful of documents on the Commanding Officer's blotting-pad.

The Colonel glanced at the paper, signed it, and reached for the next. He signed four in similar fashion, but when he came to the fifth and last he paused and laid down his pen. ' Hang it, Prout ! Is it necessary to put this quite so unpleasantly ? It's positively offensive ! Of course it was a nuisance there being nobody there to issue the groceries till five minutes past, and your being kept waiting for a little, but——' and he shot a look of appeal at the Adjutant.

' Never pays being rude on paper,' observed that official, gazing stolidly out of the window at nothing.

' Of course, if you insist upon it, sir, I will 'ave a fresh memo. prepared,' said the Quartermaster resentfully—when irritated he was inclined to drop his aitches ; ' but if I may say so, sir, we shall 'ave trouble with the Army Service Corps if we do not stand up for our rights. And I would ask that the Adjutant be not allowed to criticise my method of conducting correspondence, sir ! '

' Oh, well, I'll sign the thing,' muttered the Colonel ; ' it'll be all the same a hundred years hence how it's worded, I dare say. Now for your parcel, and then we'll toddle home—I declare to goodness I'm regularly fed up with this beastly office.'

The Quartermaster fetched the parcel and solemnly unrolled it on his Commanding Officer's table, displaying two packets—one packet contained two marksmen's badges, the other contained five. ' I wish to show you, sir,' he began, ' these badges which the Ordnance Store Department have thought fit to send us for this year's supply. The two in the small packet are samples of last year's issue, the other five are this year's. If you will look at them, sir, you will see that the new lot are of inferior quality to the old.' The Colonel examined the badges for some time. ' I can't for the life of me see any difference,' he said at last. ' Let me see, which did you say were the new lot ? '

' The two by themselves are last year's, sir, the rest are this

year's,' explained the Quartermaster in a state bordering on exasperation. 'If you will take the trouble to inspect them carefully you *must* notice what I complain of!' The Colonel gazed at the badges, prodded some of them absent-mindedly with the office knife, and finally turned helplessly to the Adjutant: 'What do you say, Annesley?'

Now the Adjutant had been entirely unable to detect any difference between the two lots of badges, and he was bored beyond endurance by the discussion. But what he wanted to do was to go away, and instinct told him that the quickest method of getting the question settled would be to agree with the worthy Prout. So he gave it as his opinion that the new badges were not up to the same standard as the old, devoutly hoping that he would not be called upon to point out features of difference, as he did not know which were the new and which were the old. 'Oh, well,' said the Colonel, considerably relieved, 'if you both agree I must of course be wrong; now that I come to look at them again I rather think that last year's lot are a bit the more classy of the two. However, luckily, it doesn't matter a damn one way or the other.'

The Quartermaster gave vent to a sound very like a snort of indignation. 'Of course, sir, if you are willing to accept any rubbish for your regiment that the Army Council sends you because no other commanding officer will accept it, I have nothing more to say. They know that this is a coloured corps, and they think anything is good enough for us. I take leave to assert, sir, that they do not treat the Grenadiers or the Gordons like this!' And he made as though to roll up the parcel again.

'But what the devil do you want me to do?' pleaded the Colonel, longing for peace and quiet, and prepared to concur in almost any proposal offering him a promise of escape.

'With your approval, sir, I shall draft a letter on the subject to the War Office,' rejoined Quartermaster Prout, 'and will bring it to you to-morrow morning ready for your signature. To-morrow's mail day, you will remember, sir. That's all I have got for you this morning—good morning, sir.' And he had gathered up his possessions and was gone before the Colonel had time to make up his mind whether he was to acquiesce or not.

'Now just see what you have let me in for, Annesley,' grumbled the Colonel. 'What made you agree with the man about his wretched badges? You know perfectly well that it's all rot, and, all the same, you go and aid and abet him in his mischief!' 'Pon

my word you are worse than he is, and between you I have got to write to those baboos in Whitehall, who'll get level with us somehow for bothering them. My experience is that when you stir up mud and ask those people to look at it, they just job your head in it, whether you're right or wrong.' The Adjutant, it must be confessed, felt a little guilty. He had not foreseen the dire consequences which would result from his adopting the very unusual attitude of not contradicting the Quartermaster flatly, no matter what he said. He remarked, however, that it would at least have the effect of keeping that pestilent person Prout quiet for a time, and his chief felt bound to allow that such a consummation would almost compensate for the inconveniences and perils involved in writing a letter to the War Office.

True to his word the Quartermaster turned up in the Commanding Officer's sanctum next morning, having carefully watched to see the Adjutant depart to mount the guard. The letter proved to be a weighty and a formidable document. It dwelt upon the vital importance of fostering emulation in marksmanship and of affording encouragement to a soldiery second to none in military zeal and in desire for efficiency. It announced that the inferior quality of the marksmen's badges recently received would be instantly detected in a corps in which all ranks were so jealous of appearances as were the rank and file of the Guava Rifles, and it not only asserted that the issue of decorations so disappointing in character would prove the death-blow of good shooting in the regiment, but it also hinted that the dissatisfaction which would arise might prove disastrous to discipline. It enclosed samples (two of the old badges and five of the new) and it wound up with an expression of touching confidence that the military authorities at headquarters would treat a deserving corps with justice. This portentous effusion, which was the result of many hours of labour on the part of Quartermaster Prout, was duly signed by the Colonel after unavailing efforts on his part to avoid committing himself until the Adjutant returned to the office. For fear of a change of mind on the part of his chief the Quartermaster took care that it was posted without delay, and a few hours later it was safely stowed in the mail-room of the liner steaming out of harbour.

When a communication of this kind comes to hand in Whitehall, the Registry Branch places it in a War Office jacket invested with its own distinguishing number, which in this case was fixed as

11/Guava Rifles/63. Then 'previous papers,' *i.e.* similar jackets with contents which bear (or are supposed to bear) on the subject are attached, making up a bundle which is swathed liberally in red tape. That having been accomplished the bundle is conveyed by a messenger to whichever branch or section the Registry officials decide to be the one that is most concerned by the communication.

The letter about the marksmen's badges obviously concerned the Equipment Branch of the Quartermaster-General's Department, and it was sent to that Branch to be dealt with. Several previous papers were attached, one of which—a bulky packet distinguished with the number 74/Claims/1352—contained the correspondence in connection with a thrilling incident in the career of the Guava Rifles which had occurred some months before. A company at musketry had succeeded in wounding an infant which had strayed unobserved on to the range, there had been a demand for compensation on the part of the parents, supported by a doctor's bill as voucher, and the question had eventually been referred to the Treasury, who (with a very bad grace, and after ascertaining that the officer in charge of the company at the time had since succumbed to yellow fever, leaving no assets) assented to a money payment out of public funds. It might appear at first sight that there was no connexion between the wounded infant and the badges, but a moment's consideration will serve to show the faultiness of such a conclusion; for not only did both questions have some connexion with musketry, but the same regiment—to wit, the Guava Rifles—figured in each.

The Equipment Branch, like most branches, has many sub-divisions, and its ramifications jut outwards to Woolwich and to Pimlico; most of its sub-divisions were afforded the opportunity of writing minutes on the subject of the badges, but without any satisfactory conclusion being arrived at by anybody. Owing to a grave impropriety on the part of a messenger boy who dropped the correspondence when using it for playing 'catch' with one of his fellows in the passage, the two sets of badges had unfortunately become intermingled, and a deputy-assistant-something was preparing to draw attention to this circumstance and to point out that there were now three of them in one packet and four in the other instead of two and five as stated by the Officer Commanding the Guava Rifles in his letter under consideration, when the whole bundle was called for by the Finance Department.

The reason for this intervention on the part of the Finance

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Department was one to which no exception could be taken; a question had arisen over a cow accidentally killed during field-firing near Ballincollig, and the General Officer Commanding at Cork had put forward a proposition that the owner of the animal should be reimbursed for his loss at the public expense; it was only natural, therefore, that the Branch of the War Office dealing with financial problems of this kind should wish to study the file, 74/Claims/1352, in which the Treasury decision with regard to the wounded infant was stored up. The Finance Department is, however, by nature retentive. When it obtains possession of a bundle of papers it sticks to them, and it stuck to this particular bundle for weeks, and might have stuck to it for months had not the official at the bottom of whose tray it was reposing been attacked by influenza, and had not a new broom in the shape of a *locum tenens* cleared the tray out. When it found its way back to the Equipment Branch, three months had already elapsed since the letter about the badges had reached the War Office. Still, considering that only eleven minutes had as yet been written, it was obvious that the question had not yet been adequately investigated.

It was therefore decided to send the correspondence to the Royal Army Clothing Department at Pimlico with the request that a full report should be furnished. The report, when it arrived, was found to be of a most exhaustive character. It began by asserting in uncompromising language that it was impossible to tell which badges in the enclosure were which; it went on to point out at considerable length that all of the badges had been so extensively fingered that, even supposing there had originally been shades of difference between them, such difference would now be effectually concealed by dirt; it solemnly declared that, as a matter of fact, there had been no difference whatever between the badges which had been manufactured in the establishment and had been issued to regiments during the two preceding years, and it wound up by asking whether any similar complaint had been received from any other corps.

The propounding of this question by the Superintendent of the Royal Army Clothing Department was hailed with unqualified satisfaction—it furnished an excuse for delaying a decision. ‘You must never, my dear fellow,’ an officer of wide experience in War Office procedure who has risen to very high estate is reported on one occasion to have said, ‘give a decision on any point if you draw less than £2000 a year.’ It is reported that that officer has



now raised the qualifying figure to £3000 a year. The author of a well-known military text-book has moreover pointed out that if you can only manage to keep correspondence circulating, you can generally escape from taking any definite action until the matter at issue has settled itself. On the strength of the question put by the Clothing Department, it was decided to address a circular letter to all battalions, inquiring whether they had observed any difference between the badges issued for the current year and those issued the previous year. It was then pointed out that it would take more than two months to get an answer from the battalion stationed at Tientsin. Eventually, after considerable discussion on paper, it was arranged (Minute 23) only to send the circular letter to a dozen battalions to be taken at random from those serving at home.

August had come round and the Colonel had flitted homewards from San Jago, leaving the second-in-command in charge; so the Quartermaster, who was now also acting as Adjutant and whose actions were practically unfettered, decided that, as the War Office had not thought fit to send any reply to the letter about the badges, the time was ripe to despatch a reminder. He did not consider it to be necessary, however, to draft quite so long a letter as on the previous occasion, and contented himself with stating that the Guava Rifles had now been anxiously expecting a communication from the War Office for four months, and with pointing out the very serious inconvenience that was being caused by this delay; but he went on to say that the dissatisfaction which had been aroused in all ranks of the regiment at its treatment in the matter of the badges was beginning to exercise a prejudicial effect upon its discipline—an allegation which, needless to say, had not the slightest foundation in fact. [The fact was that Quartermaster Prout had succeeded in persuading himself that the new issue of badges was of inferior quality; but having, after the manner of quartermasters, amassed an abundant surplus of equipment of all kinds in his store from various articles which had remained unexpended in previous years, he had supplied their decorations to all who had qualified for marksmen's badges out of this museum without touching those of which the quality was in dispute.]

He was a man resolute of purpose, and, having put his hand to the plough, he had no intention of drawing it back. He was determined to at least extort a reply out of the War Office, even if that institution refused all other satisfaction. He knew, moreover, that the



second-in-command was ready to sign anything as long as he was allowed to do it in his pyjamas, and was not called upon to peruse the paper to which he appended his name. Nor was our friend Prout disappointed in his Commanding Officer, for the letter was signed without a murmur, and it was despatched two days later by the home-going mail.

The reminder from San Jago arrived in the War Office on the very day that the circular letter to the twelve selected battalions was handed over to the staff of lady-typists to be typed. It was put in its proper place in the file—that is to say, it was kept apart from the growing pile of minute papers where it might possibly have been noticed, and was placed with the original letter, with the draft of the circular letter, with the report of the Royal Army Clothing Department, and with spare documents of various kinds such as are always kept together at the back of a War Office jacket where nobody dreams of peeping. The result was that it entirely failed to attract attention, and that it was overlooked by the Equipment Branch.

With one exception, all the battalions referred to reported that the badges of the current year's issue appeared to be precisely the same as those of the previous year. The one battalion sounding a discordant note had only just come home from South Africa, and it announced that it had not yet received its badges, and was therefore not in a position to furnish the report asked for. This involved some further correspondence, but on its being discovered that the issue of the badges to the battalion had been purposely delayed because the battalion had been ordered home, it was settled that the reports of the other eleven would suffice. The question whether a reply should not be despatched to the Guava Rifles might now have been seriously taken up, had not a casual remark in one of the minutes attracted the attention of an officer in the Equipment Branch furnished with a prying mind. It was made apparent by the said remark that the number of marksmen's badges annually demanded by the Guava Rifles was relatively small compared with the number demanded by most battalions. It therefore struck this inquisitive official that it might be interesting to learn whether foreign armies made use of decorations of this kind; for, he reasoned, it was clear that, in spite of the value set on these badges by the officer commanding the Guava Rifles, the existence of the badges had not brought about satisfactory shooting in the corps, otherwise the corps must have required, and would have demanded, more of them.

This view having been put forward in an able minute (Number 29), the head of the Equipment Branch wrote to the head of the Operations Branch, of which the Intelligence Department is a part, to ask for information as to the practice in foreign military forces.

The Operations Branch prides itself, not unjustly, on the extent of its information; it moreover always makes it a point of honour to leave no stone unturned to obtain information enabling it to reply to any question raised from any quarter, supposing that the question cannot be straightway answered from the records and books at its disposal. There was scarcely one of its sub-sections which was not affected by the conundrum propounded by the Equipment Branch, and although in the case of some countries information could be supplied at once, it was found necessary in the case of others to communicate with the military attachés accredited to their governments, or, where there was no military attaché, to request the Foreign Office to obtain the required information from His Majesty's representative on the spot. Considerable delay arose in getting replies from the military attachés in Teheran and in Pekin. The Central and South American expert did not fail to seize upon so good an opportunity for pointing out how necessary it was that there should be at least one military attaché accredited to the Central American Republics to insure that, when important information of this kind was required from that part of the world, the Intelligence Department should be able to reckon upon its acquisition with accuracy and despatch. It was, however, ultimately decided to rule out all countries outside of Europe unless the required information about their procedure in the matter of marksmen's badges was already available in the Department, and the result was that, within five weeks, a tabulated schedule was produced of which the Operations Branch had every reason to feel proud. The methods by which various foreign countries encouraged marksmanship could be ascertained from this schedule at a glance, its column of remarks would have done credit to an encyclopædia, and the head of the Branch was so much impressed with its merits that he sent the whole bundle of correspondence to the sister Branch of the General Staff dealing with training, with a minute requesting that Branch, after it had studied the schedule, to pass the papers back to the Equipment Branch. This innocent action on the part of the head of the Operations Branch was destined to have unforeseen and far-reaching results.

For when the Training Branch discovered that the Equipment

Branch had taken it upon itself to discuss on paper the value of marksmen's badges as an incentive to good shooting, and that it had furthermore actually requested the Operations Branch to afford it information so as to enable it to form an opinion on this which was purely a training question, its indignation knew no bounds. Minutes 33 to 35 were written by General Staff officers, third, second, and first grade, rising in a crescendo scale of angry comment, the last addressed to the head of the Branch. But while that highly-placed official was still aghast at the enormity committed by the Equipment Branch and was mentally preparing Minute 36, which was to bring the matter to the notice of the Chief of the General Staff, the wounded infant again created a diversion.

A Member of Parliament had been making a tour in the Antilles for the purpose of improving his mind (what there was of it), and in the course of his travels he had stayed some days in San Jago. There he had held intimate communion with a gentleman of colour who, being a political enthusiast, was naturally opposed to the local government, to the military, to the police, and to all similar official institutions. The gentleman of colour, finding an eager and sympathetic listener, expatiated amongst other things upon the arbitrary attitude adopted by the soldiery towards the civil population, and he cited as an example the case of the infant. His version of the story was that the creature had been wounded, not on the range during musketry, but in the public street by a soldier discharging his rifle at random; he maintained that the victim had been crippled for life, whereas it actually had been wounded through the fleshy part of the forearm; and he declared that the efforts of the heartbroken parents to get any satisfaction for the outrage had proved unavailing. The legislator had an unquenchable thirst for information of this kind coupled with an uncontrollable disinclination for verifying the facts. He made an elaborate entry of the alleged circumstances in his notebook, and on his returning to his native land he repaired instantly to the Metropolis and handed in to the responsible official in the House of Commons a set of questions to be asked of the Secretary of State for War on an early date. The consequence was that, this being a matter of discipline, the Discipline Branch of the Adjutant-General's Department was called upon to draft the replies for the Secretary of State to read out in the House, and an Assistant Adjutant-General of that Branch therefore called for the War Office paper 74/Claims/1352. The result was that he obtained temporary

possession of the bundle containing the correspondence about the badges as well as the correspondence about the infant.

It happened that this Assistant Adjutant-General was having an easy day, and that, having drafted the reply as to the infant to his own satisfaction, it occurred to him to open the file about the badges and to see what it was all about. He glanced through the thirty-odd minutes; he studied the schedule prepared by the Operations Branch with the liveliest interest, and then he suddenly came upon the reminder sent by the Guava Rifles and read in it that the discipline of that corps had been prejudicially affected on account of the badges. He seized his pen and addressed Minute 36 to the head of his Branch, drawing attention to the circumstance that a letter dealing with discipline had been in the War Office for no less than two months without their ever having even seen it. The head of the Discipline Branch straightway wrote to the head of the Equipment Branch to complain. The head of the Equipment Branch replied sympathetically, but declined to admit any responsibility for the irregularity which had occurred. The head of the Discipline Branch thereupon wrote to the Secretary of the War Office, who referred the matter to the head of the Registry Branch. The head of the Registry Branch pointed out that the procedure which had been followed by his Branch had been strictly in accordance with War Office regulations, and he quoted the passage bearing on the point; this laid it down that a reminder was invariably to be placed in the same jacket as the original letter, a course which had been followed in the case under discussion. The Adjutant-General happened to be away on leave at the time; therefore the head of the Discipline Branch returned the bundle to the head of the Training Branch, merely asking (in Minute 44) that the papers might be returned to him later on for further action. His intervention had occupied between a fortnight and three weeks, and had involved eight minutes.

The head of the Training Branch was now enabled to lay the correspondence before the Chief of the General Staff, who felt himself reluctantly compelled to address to the Quartermaster-General a minute which has been acknowledged by all who have had the good fortune to peruse it to be a model document of its kind. It took some time to prepare, but the result achieved more than justified the labour expended on it. The minute was trenchant, it was legible, it was convincing, it was profound. Not a redundant phrase marred the rhythm of its dignified periods, there was not

in its four paragraphs one solitary ill-chosen word, not a comma was out of place. It summarised in a crisp and incisive sentence the inconveniences and the delays that arise when branches embark on discussions, however well intended, with regard to matters outside their own especial province. Another sentence commented in scathing terms on the ineptitude of confusing a concrete question arising out of the quality of badges issued to a certain corps, with the abstract question of the value of such badges in fostering musketry efficiency. Another sentence animadverted upon the irregularity which had been committed when the Operations Branch was referred to. It is true that the minute made no definite propositions with regard to any of the numerous points which had been raised during the eight months of correspondence, but it followed in this respect the usual course adopted in papers of this particular nature. Its criticisms were destructive, not constructive.

Good judges have expressed the opinion that the Quartermaster-General's minute in reply was not unworthy of the occasion. Although conceived in a lighter vein, its whimsical humour only served to make the more conspicuous the amazing grasp which its writer had obtained of the matters in dispute. It admitted the justice of the observations which the Chief of the General Staff had felt himself called upon to make with regard to branches discussing matters which did not concern them, and in this connection the Quartermaster-General begged to invite attention to a schedule which he had had prepared (marked 'B' to distinguish it from the schedule prepared by the Operations Branch which had been marked 'A'). In this schedule thirteen distinct cases were enumerated, the numbers of the War Office papers being quoted in each case, where the General Staff had within the past six months discussed questions which concerned the Quartermaster-General's Department alone. The minute went on to express profound regret at the trouble to which the Operations Branch had been put in preparing schedule 'A,' seeing that that Branch consisted of only ninety-eight officers and others, and was therefore obviously understaffed and overworked—pleasantry at the expense of the General Staff serves as a consolation to the other sort. The Quartermaster-General closed his communication by proposing that a special War Office committee should be appointed to consider and to report on the best means of insuring that departments and branches should not interfere unnecessarily in each other's work.

The Chief of the General Staff concurred in this latter proposal, and he passed the paper on to the remaining members of the Army Council for the favour of their views, beginning with the Adjutant-General. The Adjutant-General was not a dialectician, nor was he (consciously) a humorist. In Minute 48 he announced that he also concurred in the Quartermaster-General's proposal, but that he was of opinion that the committee should further consider the best means of insuring that departments and branches should see papers which *did* concern them—it had only just come to his notice that this very file provided an example of a case where a letter on the subject of discipline had only reached his Discipline Branch purely by accident, and after great delay. He furthermore pointed out that Members of Council were in a peculiar position in that they existed in a dual capacity, being at once heads of Departments and also Members of Council, and that their position was therefore different from that of heads of branches; it would obviously be wrong, for instance, for him in his capacity of Adjutant-General to express an opinion as to whether it was necessary on strategical grounds to retain a battalion in San Jago, but he would be within his rights in discussing such a question in his capacity of a Member of Council.

The other Members of Council added weighty minutes, and finally the correspondence reached the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State's private secretary, the scion of a noble house, was a young Member of Parliament of precocious ability and infinite assurance, who fully intended shortly to become a Cabinet Minister. It was his business to make short summaries of the contents of War Office papers which came to hand, indicating the main points in them which required consideration by his chief. He summarised the paper 11/Guava Rifles/63 as follows:

'(1) The correspondence begins with a question of detail in regard to the equipment of the Guava Rifles, raised by that corps nine months ago; no reply has as yet been vouchsafed to the corps, although this sent a reminder five months ago; there does not appear to be the remotest prospect of a reply ever being sent. (2) The file has reached the Secretary of State because Members of Council want to appoint a committee to deal with certain questions of War Office procedure. (3) From the correspondence it would appear to be the case that the musketry of the Guava Rifles is of indifferent quality and that their state of discipline is far from satisfactory. (4) In Minute 48 the Adjutant-General appears to wish to raise the question whether there is any justification for



retaining the Guava Rifles or any other corps in the island of San Jago.'

The Secretary of State ignored the first two points. But with regard to the third and fourth, he wrote to the Chief of the General Staff to ask if the Guava Rifles were in all respects a corps fit to take the field, and whether there was any strategical object gained by this country maintaining that or any other battalion in such a place as San Jago; he added that he would be glad of an early reply. (The fact was that at a Cabinet Council held the previous day the Chancellor of the Exchequer had thrown a damper on the proceedings by informing his colleagues that, owing to the cost having been somewhat under-estimated of providing all adults not yet convicted of having committed a felony with a pension of a shilling a week, there would be a deficit of two and a half millions at the end of the financial year; whereupon the Prime Minister had instructed the War Minister to effect a saving of not less than one million on the Army Estimates. The abolition of the Guava Rifles would at least be a beginning towards effecting that object.)

After consulting certain of his principal subordinates, the Chief of the General Staff felt himself compelled to reply that, in so far as training was concerned, the Guava Rifles were as fit to take the field as they ever had been; he admitted, on the other hand, that he was not satisfied that any strategical object was gained by maintaining a battalion in San Jago; as regards the discipline of the Guava Rifles, which appeared to be called in question, that was a subject for the Adjutant-General to express his views upon. The Adjutant-General intimated that he had been under the impression, until he had seen this correspondence a few days ago, that the discipline of the Guava Rifles left nothing to be desired; according to the showing of the regiment itself its discipline would, however, appear recently to have deteriorated. But for the fact of the Secretary of State wishing for a prompt reply he would have felt bound to inquire further into the matter brought to light in the reminder sent by the corps with reference to its marksmen's badges. In conclusion he begged leave to point out that he had only referred to the strategical question as an illustration, having no views of any kind whatever as to the importance or otherwise of maintaining a battalion in San Jago.

Having studied these replies, the Secretary of State summoned a special meeting of the Army Council. What actually occurred at this meeting has never transpired, but it would appear to be the

case that the Council, having been apprised of the difficulties in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself and of the influence which those difficulties were to exert over the national defences, came to the conclusion that the Guava Rifles must be sacrificed. Be that as it may, the sequel is a matter of history.

‘What an insufferable time those Post Office people take!’ growled the Colonel as he sat at his table in the orderly room awaiting the mail. ‘Why, the ship’s been in these three hours, and—ah, here they are!’ as the orderly marched in, saluted and then deposited a bundle of letters on the table. ‘Well, business first, pleasure afterwards; let’s have the official ones. Only two, and both from the War Office? Now then!’ He opened the first. ‘Hullo, here’s an answer at last to that letter of yours about the marksmen’s badges, Prout, and quite civil for a wonder. But of course they do not mean to do anything—I never thought they would. However, there it is for you to read,’ and he handed it to the Quartermaster and tore open the other. ‘Good Lord! What’s this?’ he ejaculated.

‘What’s the matter, sir?’ asked the Adjutant anxiously.

The Colonel paused, carefully wiped his glasses, put them on again and then solemnly read out: ‘Sir,—I am commanded by the Army Council to acquaint you that it has been decided to discontinue maintaining a battalion in the island of San Jago. In view of the redistribution of troops consequent upon this decision, the Council regret to find themselves obliged to disband the regiment under your command. I am to inform you that detailed instructions with regard to the carrying out of this measure will be despatched to you by an early mail.’

Half an hour afterwards, as the Colonel and the Adjutant were making their way with heavy hearts towards the Mess, the Adjutant broke a mournful silence to observe, ‘Odd that this infernal letter sentencing us to be broken up should reach you by the same mail with the one in reply to that about Prout’s badges.’

‘I knew how it would be, and said so at the time, if you remember, Annesley,’ responded the Colonel; ‘you backed the fellow up about writing to the War Office. I told you they’d get level with us—and by Jove they have!’

CHAS. E. CALLWELL.



## THE KENNET AND AVON CANAL.

THESE to his memory. When I think of canals there rises before me the figure of an old Oxford Don who gave me my first taste for inland navigation. He wears an ancient flannel coat which had once been scarlet, bound with ribbon which had once been dark blue. Over his shoulder he carries a large waterproof sack, called 'the Pig,' into which all his belongings for an extended Act of Navigation are thrust anyhow. Whatever is left behind, there is always in 'the Pig' a Greek Testament, a Horace, a Virgil, and a log-book. Once upon a time no doubt there had been maps, but in my days the maps were all in his massive, shaggy head. Every bridge, every weir, every inn on Thames, Wey, Loddon, Kennet, Great Ouse, Lower Severn, both navigable Avons, and on all the canals adjacent thereto, were perfectly familiar to him. All the lock-keepers and inn-keepers were his friends; but he had a preference, perhaps because externally he was so like a large brown bear himself, for inns with the sign of 'The Bear.' If we spent a night at a town he always found a toyshop and bought himself a penny toy, preferably an animal of some sort, and he exacted a regular tribute of these from his friends. I once sent him one of those wriggling wooden snakes which you held by the tail, and by return of post received the following couplet:

Quid mihi cum serpente? Vetant pia numina rodant  
Dente venenato pestis amicitias.

He was an old-fashioned scholar, to whom the modern anthropological practice of digging up Hellenism by the roots to see what it is made of would have been hateful. Homer as a man and a poet is not more real to Mr. Andrew Lang than he was to my friend; and he loved to read his Homer in the magnificent folio of Robert and Andrew Foulis (Glasgow, 1756), which he subsequently bequeathed to me. But it is hard on a quarter of a century since he passed the River, and it was not until this very unpleasing summer that I was able to revisit one of our favourite navigations,<sup>1</sup> the Kennet and Avon Canal.

There is much talk nowadays of the revival of canals, and I profess

<sup>1</sup> All legally navigable waterways except the Thames are 'Navigations'; the Thames alone is a River, or rather *the* River.

myself to be entirely a disciple of that Mr. Philpot (ΦΙΛΟΠΟΤΑΜΟΣ—*fluviorum amans*) in Peacock's novel, who 'seized on Mr. Firedamp and pinned him down to a map of Africa, on which he traced the courses of mighty inland rivers, till Mr. Firedamp's hair stood on end at the bare imagination of the mass of malaria that must be engendered thereby.' I always rejoice at the prospect of a lot of useless land being turned into good, serviceable, barge-bearing water; but I fear that a good many people will be *panamisés* before the good days of 1790–1820 come round again. Of all the works of that blessed epoch the Kennet and Avon is unquestionably the best survivor; most beautiful, most lonely in its long, middle, Wiltshire reaches, and by no means without activity and efficiency in the stretch from Devizes to Bath. There barges really do ply, and ply for profit; on the Berkshire stretch there is only one regular customer, plying, I am told, between Hungerford and Burghfield, a few miles above Reading. I presume that it is not a libel to say that the Great Western Railway, the present owner of the navigation, does not greatly desire to encourage business traffic thereon. No doubt it is obliged by Act of Parliament to keep the navigation open; but I fancy that the word 'open' is somewhat insufficiently defined, or is capable of more interpretations than one. Thus, when a lock has to be rebuilt, it is built of a size which will not accommodate the large craft for which John Rennie made provision at the end of the eighteenth century. For this your 'pleasure navigator' has every reason to be grateful, for the large locks, many of which remain on the eastern section, besides being in a parlous condition as to gates and sluices, take nearly double the time to fill of the smaller 'bricken' locks which are the rule westwards from Hungerford; all these last are in really good repair.

A general scouring of the canal takes place every year at Whitsuntide, and during this the navigation is closed for a fortnight; so, although Whitsuntide would probably be the most delightful and flowery period of the year for the trip, intending navigators would do well to make inquiries at Reading or Bath as to the actual days of the 'stop.' On the other hand, July is not a good month, because the weed-cutter is abroad in full force, and both the surface of the pounds<sup>1</sup> and the sluices of the locks are apt to be choked

<sup>1</sup> A 'pound' is the space between two locks; the pound usually means the stretch at the summit-level of the canal between the last lock up and the first lock down.

with floating matter. I should therefore recommend May or September as the best periods.

The whole distance from Reading to Bath is but seventy-five miles, but, with one hundred and two locks to be passed, it is really a good five days' job; indeed, if you did not carry down the famous 'ladder' of twenty-nine locks in two miles, at Devizes, you would have to throw in another day. All through the navigation are lock-keepers, but, as each of these has a varying number of locks to look after, you don't often find them at your own end of their beat, and so you must carry a winch of one-inch span, which will be supplied by the very courteous agent of the G.W.R. Company at Reading on a deposit of five shillings. You will also have to pay him (not on deposit) a toll of twenty-five shillings, the estimated value of the two lockful of water which you will send down on the respective sides of the summit level. And he will give you in return a permit, which you must get signed at six different canal offices along the route. Moreover, you must be careful to leave all the locks empty; and so, in your journey upstairs, you will first have to go in and fill your lock, get through and shut the top gate, and then open one of the sluices of the bottom gate; and in going downstairs you will have to fill your lock before you can enter it at all, all of which means time.

Whatever way you look at it, the canal was, for its day, a great engineering triumph; greater, I think, than any of the artificial waterways of the flat Midlands, and far greater than the more famous 'Thames and Severn,' completed in 1792, just at the date that our canal was begun. Seven miles of the 'Thames and Severn' are no doubt through a more difficult country than anything between Reading and Devizes, and the famous Sapperton Tunnel, under Lord Bathurst's park at the summit level of the Thames and Severn, is over two miles long; but against this the Kennet and Avon has to set not merely Devizes ladder, alongside of which you can whizz down the towpath on a bicycle (with a stout brake) for two miles, but also the three great aqueducts which carry it over the River Avon at a height not far short of 100 feet. To row across a bridge and look down on the tumbling weirs of Avon below is certainly one of the strangest of sensations. The real thing to do is, of course, to combine the two systems into one journey; that is to say, to start from Reading by the Kennet and Avon, follow the Avon down to Bristol, put your boat on the Midland Railway to Berkeley, strike the Berkeley Canal

there, and ascend it to Framilode, go by the (very lovely) little Stroudwater Canal to Stroud, by the Thames and Severn to Lechlade, and finally descend the little known but most charming piece of the Thames from Lechlade to Oxford, and so to Reading. I do not recommend any navigator to descend the Avon below Bristol, still less to attempt the treacherous and wind-swept tides of the Severn up to Berkeley. For a canal journey there are but two kinds of suitable boat: either a canoe or a light inrigged gig; and I prefer the latter, because the canoe is apt to get swept about in the locks. And, tame and slow as it may sound to the energetic oarsman, towing, or, as we used to call it, 'tracking,' is, on the smooth and streamless surface of a canal, far preferable to sculling. You should tow, if you are a company of two or three, by hour shifts, and the 'tow-horse' will open the locks during his shift.

On the occasion I am describing I had to do the first part of the journey alone—a very foolish thing to do. But it was begun really in expiation of a vow I had made the year before on the banks of the Norwegian Orkla. For the salmon were not running up properly, and the weather was cold and blustering; letters came from home telling of the marvellous sunshine and beauty of July 1908. To Freya and Thor I then vowed that my next July should be spent by the gentler streams of home. And wasn't it like the English climate of 1909 to disappoint me? And accordingly no one would be 'so mad' as to come with me for the beginning of the trip.

A stream of winter strength in the Thames enabled me to scull my little boat from Oxford to Goring in seven hours, and to Reading in two more on the following day. To go up the Kennet unaided was, however, another matter; Kennet, though—

Forgetting the bright speed he had  
In his high mountain cradle

of the Marlborough downs, was yet of sufficient volume and swiftness between Reading and Newbury (where the canal proper begins) to make it advisable for me to hire a stout 'unemployed' to act as tow-horse. The first lock-keeper to whom I suggested this dived into a neighbouring 'pub,' and instantly produced a very handsome specimen of the genus old soldier, who 'hadn't had a job for a fortnight.' He was a merry fellow, and readily entered into the suggestion of 'five shillings a day and find hisself' until I could be joined by a companion who had promised to see me

through the last two days at least. Up we went gaily, and gradually the long string of sad-faced Reading fishermen were replaced only by cows,

Knee deep in meadow-sweet :

and the banks glittered with yellow iris, blue geranium, and the far rarer golden mimulus. Is it not strange that this plant should occur sparingly on the Wey, sparingly on some of the Yorkshire streams, not at all on the Thames, but in profusion on the lower Kennet? Very swift and clear was the stream, very numerous and pretty the black and white swing bridges, at each of which you must dip your tow-mast and coil up your line. Our first day's journey ended at the pretty little inn at Theale. But the next morning, oh! where was my old soldier? He had gone off to 'find himself,' and, I suppose, had either found himself too well or, more probably, half a day's work on end had proved too much for an unemployed. Anyhow, as far as I was concerned, Mr. Nokes was not.

The village, however, speedily yielded another and even finer specimen of the same genus, an ex-Guardsman, who had been a mutineer on the celebrated occasion when a battalion of Guards was exiled to Bermuda. There he had been 'shipwrecked and had to save his life by swimming half a mile in his clothes'; he had also, when in a line regiment, been all through the South African war. I did not question the truth of these, nor of many other statements of Mr. Stokes; all he had to do was to tow me along. 'Don't give him beer,' said the man who found him for me, 'and he will do any amount of hard work.' On our first day, however, an inferior substitute for beer descended on him from heaven in such quantities that, when we had made but five miles in three and a half hours, and the boat had twice had to be pulled out on the bank and emptied, my heart failed me and I sent him back to Theale by train, bidding him meet me the next morning at Aldermaston lock. Somewhat to my surprise, he kept tryst, and, to my still greater surprise, the day remained fine till the evening; Stokes apparently enjoyed his leisurely walk of fourteen miles to the charming little inn at Kintbury, where I left him for the night because I desired, in memory of old days, to sleep three miles further on at 'The Bear' of Hungerford.

There one sleeps in the bedroom occupied by His Highness the Prince of Orange during those memorable days in the early winter of 1688, when the fate of Europe was being decided by the long

and persistent bleeding of the nose of King James II. Returning to Kintbury by train the next morning, I ascertained that Mr. Stokes had passed a good night and had an excellent supper and breakfast. There was no doubt that he had already done a day and a half's work and earned two days' wages. Perhaps the thought of another whole day's work was too much for him, for, like the sailor in *Punch*, he soon confessed that he was 'all of a tremble.' He couldn't bring himself to cross the lock gates, or to handle the winch, and it ended in my having to get out of the boat and open the locks myself. Neither would Mr. Stokes consent to sit in the boat and allow me to pull him into and out of the locks. For a man who had been through so many adventures by land and sea, he was, to put it mildly, unenterprising. So I had to tow the boat through each lock like a pug dog on a string; and at last even the swing bridges proved too much for Mr. Stokes' strength. As regards the towing, however, I was perfectly brutal and practical, and insisted on his performing his task, for I frankly did not believe a word of his 'trembles.' All that day, after leaving Hungerford, the waterway wound along the sides of rounded sheep-fed downs, in almost utter loneliness except for its rival, the Great Western Railway, along which thundered at intervals some mighty Cornish express. We passed only one village, a pretty old red-brick business poured down the side of a hill, called Great Bedwyn. Sometimes the canal widened out into little lakes, fed by hill springs (for we were nearing the summit level), and covered with white and golden water lilies; while moorhens and dabchicks squattered away in terror at the extraordinary apparition of a boat. At last we reached the 'Little Ladder' of nine locks which takes you to the top. There was a lock-keeper, and so Mr. Stokes was able to enjoy nine pipes in two very tranquil hours. Part of his trouble was no doubt mental; though during the three days he must have watched, or taken part in, the opening of some half a hundred locks, and though he had been born and bred on the canal, I could see that it was a mystery to him how water rose to its own level; like Cowper's spaniel, he

Puzzling set his puppy brains  
To comprehend the case,

and the effort no doubt exhausted him.

At last we were at the top, and it was nearly five o'clock. At the next flight of locks, four miles further on, we should descend

and I began to wonder what Stokes would say when he saw the boat going down. Visions of myself as a cruel tyrant or sweater, with the death or ultimate idiocy of this magnificent animal on my conscience, began to haunt me. He had already walked nine miles to-day. Savernake railway station was not half a mile off, and two and a penny (his return fare to Theale) would rid me of him for ever. Suddenly Providence interposed in the same sense. Right under Savernake Station the canal enters a short tunnel—not a quarter of a mile long and with the point of light quite visible at the other end. ‘Coil up the line, Stokes,’ said I; and he coiled. ‘Get into the boat.’ ‘Where are we going, sir? Not through that tunnel, I ’ope?’ ‘Yes, certainly. Why not? I will scull through.’ ‘No, sir; I was ’ired to tow, and tow I ’ave; but not that!’

The relief was mutual. We parted on Savernake platform, and I trust that he has since found more congenial if not lighter work. When one comes to deal with the ‘casually unemployed’ the truth of Whately’s dictum seems to be perennial: ‘I don’t want no harms nor no charity,’ said the tramp to that philosopher; ‘what I want is work.’ ‘No, my man,’ said Whately; ‘what you want is wages.’ Mr. Nokes and Mr. Stokes alike are ready to do one day’s, or at a pinch even two days’ job; after that they must have a few days’ rest, during which they will lean gracefully on posts and tell stories of South Africa. They are now leaning on their respective posts at Reading and Theale and telling blood-curdling stories of me.

With unspeakable relief I paddled through the tunnel, a couple of miles after which the summit level ended in the first of the steps downstairs, a little series of four locks shut away among the lonely hills. Four more miles brought me to the little Wiltshire town of Pewsey; not a single human being had appeared to me since Savernake. For I was now well out on the long pound which leads to Devizes; it is a fifteen-mile pound, a circumstance rare in the osteology of canals, but worthy of the originality and daring of John Rennie. Most highly can I recommend the little Phoenix Hotel at Pewsey.

The next morning I was joined by the expected companion, whom I will briefly call The Drybob. He came by a very early train from Oxford; so early indeed, and so threatening had been the morning, that at six o’clock he had crept back to his bed, until his stern mother had pulled him out of it and insisted on his starting.



He was clad in an oilskin, but little else, when he stood on the Pewsey platform at 9.30 A.M. We started by towing in hour shifts, and after we had finally parted with the main G.W.R. line at Woodborough (where, by the way, there is a noble White Horse carved on the downside, with a most suspiciously modern-looking docked tail), the loneliness of the scene was quite sublime. In his first shift The Drybob tore on a swing-bridge a large hole in his only pair of tr-s-rs. We comforted ourselves with the thought that at Devizes we should easily find a tailor to 'run him together'; but, of course, at Devizes it was 'early closing day.' I forbear, however, to enlarge upon the shifts to which this trifling incident reduced my companion and, incidentally, myself. Let not the navigator miss the lovely church of Bishop's Canning, three miles east of Devizes, a most perfect specimen of Early English. Inside is a curious painting, of late Elizabethan or early Jacobean date, called 'Manus Meditationis'—to wit, a large human hand, along the fingers of which are painted in black letter

'The scrolls that teach thee to live and die.'

And Roundway Down, with all its brave memories of 1643, hangs in front of you as you approach the comfortable old town. You can see at a glance the enormous importance of the fortress of Devizes, which guards the easiest passage from West to East which you will find between the Channel and the Warwickshire Avon. Like the great Norman stronghold of Domfront, it looks as if it were the westernmost point of a great line of central hills, and as if all west of it were plain; in reality, both are flanked by much greater hills on each side, and in the case of Devizes the hills begin again very little beyond the point of vision.

Here there is the famous 'Great Ladder,' and for the sum of four shillings the Canal Office people will put your boat on a hand-cart and wheel her down the towpath. Each of the twenty-nine locks is a separate entity, but, in order to insure a good supply of water, a series of pounds has been dug out on the hillside to the north of the waterway between the several locks. All are in excellent repair, and we were told that smart bargees will clear the whole lot in under five hours. Barges, in fact, now came in evidence, and as we approached Seend, about two miles below the last step of the Devizes staircase, we had to wait about twenty minutes while two of them began to descend the next small flight of five steps, in front of us. We chaffed their crews about their manifest



eagerness to reach the 'Barge Inn' at Seend, until one of them made use of the curious expression that we had got 'leeches on our tongues.' There was no sleepable place at Seend, and so we took a foolish little train back to Devizes, the local 'Bear' of which is one of the *Ursi Majores et Meliores* of Great Britain; and, while we were waiting for this train, the lock-keeper took us to see some very interesting remains of old ironworks to which, in the golden days of inland navigation, barges used to bring the best Welsh coal; now the works are all deserted and grass-grown save where the russet ironstone shows up in little overhanging cliffs.

When that stainless knight Sir Ralph, afterwards my Lord Hopton, lay sore wounded in Devizes Castle in the month of July 1643, and when his equally stainless adversary Sir William Waller lay outside the town, 'so confident that the Royalists were at his mercy that he had written to the Parliament that his work was done,' there was but one hundred and fifty weight of match left in the castle stores; but Sir Ralph from his sick bed 'ordered diligent officers to search every house in the town and to take all the *bed cords* they could find, and to cause them to be speedily beaten and boiled' (Clarendon apparently means 'boiled in the resin tub'). 'By this sudden expedient there was by the next morning provided about fifteen hundredweight of such serviceable match as very well endured that sharp service'; and so 'The Devizes' was saved for King Charles until Wilmot arrived and swept Waller before him at Roundway. 'Match' is, of course, the inflammable stuff, a yard or two of which a seventeenth-century soldier hung somewhere about him, with one end smouldering, to ignite the powder in his musket; and a similar tinder may be made to-day by boiling any ordinary rope in a solution of resin. What exact position in domestic economy was then held by 'bed cords' is not clear to me; let us hope it had no connection with what Sam Weller called, in a later age, 'the twopenny rope.' Perhaps it was an uneasy feeling that Sir Ralph had plundered some essential part of our very ancient beds, or perhaps it was merely the quantity of strawberries and cream we had consumed at dinner, that caused us both to pass an uneasy night at the best of hostelries. Anyhow, I dreamed that Sir Thomas Lawrence, whose father once kept this identical inn, was trying to paint the portrait of The Drybob, and that I was trying to persuade the P.R.A. at least to wait until his sitter's tr-s-rs could be mended; and so we were both astir early the next morning for the last stage of our journey.

This, though lacking in the loneliness which forms half the charm of canal travelling, was unquestionably by far the most beautiful stretch of the waterway. We trained out to our boat at Seend, and descended two more locks there. Two more, a mile or two afterwards, at Semington left us still high up on that hillside which had looked so like a plain when viewed from the top of the Devizes ladder, and soon the Avon appeared a tiny silver thread far below us. The weather was gloriously hot and fine, and we sculled in two hour shifts to Bradford-on-Avon. The sculling of The Drybob, when it came to his turn, was rather like that of King Jamie in the 'Lady of the Lake':

Seldom perhaps if e'er before  
His noble hand had grasped an oar,  
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,

and, if the shallop didn't exactly fly o'er the lake, the gig at least dug her nose into the canal with praiseworthy assiduity. But, when we arrived at Bradford, King Jamie wisely resolved that his next effort should be made with the familiar towing line.

At Bradford we duly inspected the wonderful little Saxon church which has been variously attributed to the eighth and tenth centuries. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to whom it now belongs, cause a service to be held in it once a year, and it must be the most ancient place of worship still used, and still standing much as it was first built, in Great Britain. The lovely old town of pure grey stone is poured down the converging sides of two very steep hills, and contains many splendid houses of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, memorials of the day when it far outshone, as the centre of the English woollen industry, its Yorkshire rival of the same name. After a light lunch, we started on the nine-mile pound which winds through deep woodlands to Bath; I have already mentioned the aqueducts which there span the deep and narrow valley of the Avon. Bridges are few, and the towing path changes only at the aqueducts, and so we reached Bath in a comfortable three hours. Seven very deep locks will lead you down through the beautiful clean city to the extremely dirty river Avon, the state of which is here (I quote from a guide book) 'a disgrace to the Corporation.' But our journey was at an end, and we got the lock-keeper to telephone to the Great Western station for a trolly to meet us at the canal wharf above the locks, in order to put the gig

on the railway for Oxford. Soon we were jogging through the streets of the city on that same trolley, supporting our boat on her keel, and followed by an admiring crowd which conceived that we were in some mysterious way connected with a rehearsal of the approaching pageant, pictorial advertisements of which greeted our eyes at every turn.

C. R. L. FLETCHER.

THE PALADIN.<sup>1</sup>*AS BEHELD BY A WOMAN OF TEMPERAMENT*

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## AN ORDEAL.

For the last time we behold Sir Bedford Slutter ascending the steps of Napier's house. Upon his large, cleanly-shaved pink face we observe a decorous expression of resignation to the Divine will tempered by human sympathy and regret, and faintly illuminated, possibly, by the reflection that men might come and go, but fees remained. Buckle, who had enormous respect for the illustrious visitor, ushered him into the library.

'I'll tell Mr. Napier you are here, Sir Bedford.'

Sir Bedford pulled a dark grey glove from his right hand.

'Buckle——'

'I beg pardon, Sir Bedford!'

'I am very much upset, my old friend, ve-ry much upset.'

'We were all upset, Sir Bedford. My master, sir, looks ten years older this morning.'

Sir Bedford sat down, and adjusted his gold pince-nez. When he spoke his voice had a rich, mellow tone, which somehow suggested to the bereaved that life, despite its sorrows and sufferings, was well worth the living.

'I have not felt so upset, Buckle, since that black Monday when my patient, the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Blutenburg-Dankerstein, expired at the very moment when I was offering her my congratulations upon the improvement in her condition.'

Buckle replied with extreme deference:

'Man and boy, sir, I've worked for fifty years within a hundred yards of Harley Street. It's not death upsets *us*, Sir Bedford. We see too much of that. It's—it's the unexpected.'

'A very apposite remark.'

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1909, by H. A. Vachell, in the United States of America.

Buckle bowed. And his voice had acquired something of the ripe richness of Sir Bedford's when he asked solemnly :

'Can I get you a glass of sherry, Sir Bedford ?'

'No, no.'

'It's the King's sherry, sir.'

'Indeed ? A fine wine, a ve-ry fine wine, but—no, no, not at ten in the morning ! Tell your master I should like to have a word with him as reasonably soon as possible.'

'Very good, Sir Bedford. I shall take the liberty of placing the sherry in the hall, Sir Bedford.'

He went out, leaving the eminent physician to his own reflections, which soared into kings' palaces and thence descended through butler's pantries into snug cellars where aged and royal wines awaited their appointed and glorious destiny.

'Bless my soul, you startled me.'

Napier had entered. He looked very pale and thin, in striking contrast to the rubicund rotundity of his visitor. Sir Bedford, after the usual greeting, said soothingly :

'Come, come, my dear Napier, I must protest against your taking this blow so hard. You look as if you'd not slept a wink !'

'I have been up all night.'

'No man could have done more.'

'My worries are not what you think. I'm concerned with the living more than the dead.'

'Well, well, I shall make it my affair, Napier, that the world hears that this was not quite unexpected by—us.'

'You are very kind.' He spoke curtly, in a tone which caused Sir Bedford to open his slightly prominent eyes even wider than usual. 'The truth is, the less the world hears of this case the better.'

'Eh—what ?'

Buckle came in.

'Lord Camber is here.'

Sir Bedford murmured : 'Shall I see him ?'

Napier turned to Buckle.

'I will receive his lordship in a few minutes. By the way, I am expecting a memorandum from the Society of Clinical Research. Bring it in the moment it arrives.'

As soon as the servant had gone, Sir Bedford said with agitation : 'What did you mean, my dear Napier, by your extraordinary remark just now ?'

'Simply this : between ourselves my unhappy patient has been done to death.'

'Done to death ? Good Heavens !'

'By a man whom you and the rest of the world regard as a sort of Bayard. I'm quite sure he thinks himself a Bayard.'

'Done to death ! What an expression !'

'I don't pick my words. Lord Camber is responsible for his wife's death.'

'My dear Napier, my dear fellow, forgive me. I can make due allowance for your great disappointment, but "done to death" is libellous. Frankly, you are morbid. I do not pretend to misunderstand you. You demanded from Camber what he was unable to supply : that passionate love which seldom survives the honeymoon of—a *mésalliance*. Strictly *entre nous*, I admit, with reluctance, that this particular marriage was a disaster, which has ended—as I anticipated—with death. I state my profound conviction that the fittest has survived.'

'If I were sure of that——!'

Sir Bedford held out his plump hand.

'I must be off, unless I can be of service. Banish morbid misgivings. And I entreat you as a friend to consider your own health. I have always done so, with the gratifying consciousness of being thereby the better able to minister to others.'

'You are very kind.'

'You are, I am told, almost a teetotaller. At such a time as this, a little stimulant, a glass of sound wine. Yes, yes, you take me. Good-bye, good-bye.'

He bustled away, pursing up his too full lips and frowning. This young Napier was undeniably clever, but lacking in common sense, and, assuredly, most indiscreet. *Done to death !* What an expression ! Not even his Majesty's sherry could take the taste of that out of his mouth.

As he sank back upon the cushions of his brougham, Napier was saying to Buckle—

'Go to Miss Yorke's room, and ask her to come here. When I ring twice—twice, you understand ?—show Lord Camber in.'

As Buckle disappeared, Napier went to the laboratory door and unlocked it. He glanced at the cabinet, hesitating. Then he altered the combination of the lock, and returned to his desk a few moments before Esther entered. They had met already, but in the presence of others. Esther, thanks to Napier's precautions,

had not learned the news of Lady Camber's death till the morning. She appeared pale but composed.

'Did you sleep?' he asked.

'Yes—very soundly.'

'That is well. Please sit down.'

'Not till I have thanked you from the bottom of my heart for your letter. Oh! your consideration, your kindness——! And your trust in me——.' She spoke brokenly. He made a warning gesture, but she continued: 'You guessed that I was withholding something, something you ought to know. Mr. Napier, I was pledged to silence. I—I couldn't speak. But this death releases me. And now, I can speak.'

'Not yet. Miss Yorke, are you strong enough to stand an ordeal?'

'An ordeal?'

'I can use no other word. If I could spare you I would. If I could listen to your story first, how gladly I would do so. But I have a duty to perform, and it must be done regardless of my own feelings and regardless of yours.'

'I have been very weak, but my strength has come back.'

'It is necessary that I should put some questions to Lord Camber. As those questions concern you, they should be asked and answered in your presence.'

She remained silent for an instant, then she said nervously: 'I can't meet Lord Camber this morning. I—can't.'

'But if I assure you, as your friend, that it is necessary, that you must meet him, what then?'

'I am in your hands.'

He rang the bell twice.

Harry entered. It would be doing him injustice to affirm that of the three persons present he was the least distressed, but he bore himself from long habit with distinction. Summoned in the middle of the previous night, he had arrived greatly agitated, and after a short interview with Napier had returned to his own house knowing nothing except the bare fact that his wife had died without recovering consciousness. This one thought dried a few tears. A fearful scandal had been smothered. He did not sleep, obsessed by this tremendous conviction, which gradually became as poppy and mandragora, soothing deliciously fears and misgivings. Let us add that he thought very tenderly of poor Alice, and had achieved already a sense of detachment in regard to her which can only be described as prodigious. His manner in greeting Esther and Napier

was the pink of perfection. We must regret that Sir Bedford, so fine a judge, was not present. Harry's grave concern at Napier's pallid and worn appearance provoked a curt sentence.

'I've been at work, away from home, all night.'

He indicated a chair, which Camber took. Esther sat near the paladin, her hands crossed upon her lap; her eyes upon the carpet. Camber glanced at her, trying to challenge attention, slightly disconcerted because she refused to look at him, and because Napier seemed so confoundedly preoccupied and impassive. Feeling that the ice must be broken, he took the first plunge.

'I blame myself terribly for what happened yesterday. I shall never forgive myself. I—I—— As you see, I can't talk about it.'

'I must,' said Napier. 'The change for the worse in my patient began after your first visit, and day after day it became more acute. You promised to co-operate cordially with me, but you didn't.'

The face that our paladin raised to meet Napier's glance was ingenuously open and candid. He perceived that the moment was ripe for a manly, straightforward presentation of a truth too long concealed.

'I promised more than I could perform,' he replied, with dignity. 'I have not the effrontery to play the hypocrite. If my poor wife had lived, a separation would have been inevitable.'

'You let her understand that?'

'Heavens! What sort of a brute do you take me for? I did my best, but I'm no actor.'

'You acted yesterday.'

'What do you mean?'

'And you are acting—now.'

'This is going too far——'

'I am going as far as possible. You acted yesterday, and you are acting now, but your words and actions never imposed on me.'

'You dare——'

'I know everything.'

Our paladin turned a hunted glance upon Esther, silent and pale, staring at the pattern of the carpet.

'What have you told him?' he stammered.

'Miss Yorke has told me nothing. Peach came to me last night. You attempted to bribe her, Lord Camber.'

'I did,' he answered, not without spirit. 'My wife, with that woman eavesdropping, had brought a monstrous charge against Miss Yorke.'



'Monstrous?'

'Yes—monstrous. You can guess what was said by an intensely jealous woman in a moment of ungovernable passion.'

'I can believe that such a charge was monstrous, but had you not seriously compromised Miss Yorke?'

'How?'

'By meeting her secretly. Peach saw you in Cavendish Square and told her mistress.'

'Oh!' said Esther, in an agonised tone, 'that is what killed her.'

'No,' Napier replied, 'that is not what killed her.'

'I asked for the interview,' said Esther miserably. 'It was my doing, not his.'

'You must have had a strong reason?'

'I had.'

Napier looked at Harry, flushed by the shock of Napier's words, but, on account of them, doubly anxious to rehabilitate himself. He expanded his chest, lifted his head, and spoke in the sonorous voice which had earned him reputation as an after-dinner orator. The defence of an innocent woman aroused all that was best in him.

'It is awful, terrible, that my poor wife should have heard of this meeting, but Miss Yorke and I are very old friends. If I have compromised her I am ready to make amends. There was a time when I hoped she would become my wife. I am not ashamed to confess that she is and always has been the one woman in the world to me. This is not the moment to dwell on that; but you have forced me to this confession. Miss Yorke's reason for wishing to see me in private does not concern you, although I admit that our being spied upon by a malicious and unscrupulous woman has had most lamentable results.'

'The results are what concern me,' said Napier. 'Did you take advantage of this interview to make it plain to Miss Yorke that your old friendship could not be renewed?'

'No,' Harry replied sullenly.

'Am I right in supposing that Lady Camber knew nothing of previous love passages between you and her nurse?'

'On account of her jealous disposition I did not mention them to her.'

Napier turned to Esther, and his voice softened as he said: 'I am quite sure that you saw the propriety of not renewing a friendship which might cause pain to your patient?'

'I did,' said Esther, almost inaudibly.

'I do not press for an answer, but possibly that was the strong reason that animated you in asking for this interview?'

'Yes—it was.'

'Thank you. But you, Lord Camber, refused to accept as final Miss Yorke's request?'

'I didn't want to lose a friend. I protest against this absurd inquisition. It is unnecessary and most painful to Miss Yorke. However bitterly one may regret what happened yesterday, it is impossible to shirk the conclusion that—er—'

'Things have turned out for the best, eh?'

'You put it with a singular lack of delicacy, but my unfortunate wife's death has ended a deal of trouble.'

Napier's voice was very grim, as he replied: 'The trouble is not ended, Lord Camber.'

'What do you mean, sir?'

Napier picked up a piece of paper lying upon his desk. 'This is a death certificate, which I have not signed yet.'

The flush upon Harry's face deepened. Was this man mad, as well as grossly impertinent? He felt the blood throbbing in his temples, as Napier continued: 'Facts have come to my notice which many men in my position would deem it their duty to make public.'

Harry broke in furiously: 'What damned—'

'Silence!' Napier's voice electrified both man and woman. Esther put her hands to her face, apprehending that worse was to follow; Harry, for a paladin, looked extremely foolish. In his former tone, Napier continued: 'Pray give me credit for wishing to avoid publicity as much as you do.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Harry.

As he spoke Buckle entered with an envelope upon a salver, presented it to Napier, and retired. Napier laid it upon his desk, beside the certificate. Before he spoke again, he picked up a pen and began to twist it in his fingers, a trick familiar enough to Esther, and one indicating nervous strain.

'Because I wish to avoid publicity, Lord Camber, I am holding a private enquiry here and now. Yesterday, when I informed you of Lady Camber's critical condition, both you and Miss Yorke were aware that my patient had not spoken since her seizure.'

'Well, sir?'

'You will admit that if Lady Camber was unable to give her version of what you had described as a little joke, and if Peach held her tongue, as you might reasonably believe she would, why then

Miss Yorke and you would be relieved of any apprehension of a scandal. Bear that in mind ! Now—have you ever heard of Talin ? ’

‘ Never. ’

Napier smiled faintly. Scientific England had acclaimed his discovery.

‘ It is a vegetable alkaloid which I isolated with Miss Yorke’s assistance. Please give me your attention, Lord Camber. ’

But our paladin’s eyes were fixed upon Esther’s face. At the sudden mention of Talin, her quick wits jumped to the truth. Napier knew that she had taken the drug and replaced it. The shock was so great that she was seized with the old weakness and dizziness. Then, out of the gathering mists in her mind, she saw the eyes of Napier, kind and pitiful. With a tremendous effort she became calm. She understood what Napier meant when he emphasised the word ‘ ordeal. ’ And she knew also that her friend’s imperative injunction to Camber was intended to save her confusion, to make him withdraw his amazed stare from her quivering face. Harry turned.

‘ I’m attending, ’ he muttered.

‘ I shall be as untechnical as possible. Talin has the peculiar properties of stimulant narcotics. For instance, in very minute doses, it would act as a heart tonic. An overdose would produce coma and—death. ’

Again Camber glanced at Esther. But this time she valiantly confronted him with steady eyes.

‘ You don’t dare to—— ’

Napier held up his hand.

‘ After you left I asked Miss Yorke to prepare a simple tincture. I left her alone in the laboratory where the cabinet containing the Talin stands. She and I are the only persons in the kingdom who know the combination of letters which opens the cabinet. When I came back, Miss Yorke was at work setting my apparatus in order. The tincture had been sent up. Struck by her appearance of physical distress, I urged her to visit a friend. She did so, returning in the evening. I had instructed the butler to show her in here on arrival. ’

He paused, twisting the pen in his thin fingers. Harry had absorbed every word of the narrative. Napier’s voice changed when it began again ; it was softer, more sympathetic, no longer the voice of a prosecuting counsel, but rather that of an eloquent pleader for the defence. Esther noted the change, and understood it. Its subtlety was lost upon Harry, enthralled by the significance of Napier’s words.

'I wanted to see Miss Yorke to apologise for an unintentional want of consideration. I did so. Then I begged her to go to bed. Obviously, she was worn out. To my surprise, she asked permission to work in the laboratory, to finish the tidying-up, which it happened I had done myself. I insisted upon bed, and she went upstairs. Shortly afterwards, I conceived the idea of trying a minute dose of Talin upon my patient. The gradual failing of the heart's action was becoming very alarming. I opened the cabinet. The Talin was missing.'

'My God!' exclaimed Harry.

Again Esther looked at him, and a faint derisive smile flickered across her face.

'I had reason to believe that the phial might be replaced. And it was replaced.'

Harry sprang to his feet, his features convulsed and working, his voice harsh and broken.

'Not by—not by——?'

'By me,' said Esther steadily.

'By—you!'

'Why did you take the Talin?' said Napier gently.

Esther hesitated. Almost inaudibly she answered: 'To—to kill myself.'

'Why should you wish to kill yourself?' demanded Harry.

Whatever happened you knew that I should stand by you.'

'There were several reasons, but I'll give the greatest.' Again she paused, and Napier saw that she was very deeply moved. Then she said, speaking in a whisper, but with clearest articulation: 'I was not going to face starvation a second time.'

'Starvation!' exclaimed Harry. 'Starvation?' he repeated in a bewildered tone. 'You had me.'

'What made you change your mind?' asked Napier, leaning forward.

For the first time his voice betrayed eagerness and curiosity, but his eyes remained kind and sympathetic. Esther's features hardened as she heard Harry repeat the question in an autocratic tone:

'Exactly! What made you change your mind?'

She ignored him, meeting Napier's questioning glance with dignity. But her voice—low, pleading, broken by emotion—indicated neither guilt nor innocence, only distress.

'The temptation to take it came suddenly. You might have returned at any moment. I was dismissed from the case; and it seemed

a last chance, a chance I snatched at. Then I went to see my old friend Miranda Jagg. I found her in bed, in great pain. And then——'

'Yes?'

'I—I saw that I was w-w-wanted, that there was something to do, w-w-work which m-must be done.'

The faltering, stammering utterance touched Napier to a profounder pity than he had yet experienced. Far otherwise did this halting, seemingly inadequate explanation affect our paladin. The passionate surprise and distress which had flamed in his face vanished, leaving his handsome features dull and stolid. That *his* claims should be ignored and Miranda's acknowledged at such a moment appeared preposterous. The accretions of conceit, ever increasing since the famous century at Lord's, the insidious habit of self-indulgence which blinds its victims to self-denial in others, and, lastly, an inherited incapacity to consider anything or anybody from a point of view other than his own—these hounded him headlong to the conviction that a more sinister motive had driven Esther to take the Talin. The unhappy creature, distracted by the fear of discovery and unable to trust the man she loved and who loved her, had yielded to an abominable temptation. She had taken the Talin, but—thank God—she had not used it. Want of trust! That accounted for so much in their lives. She had not trusted him when her father died, she had not trusted him at Mont Plaisir; she had not trusted him in this supreme moment.

It is pathetic and humorous to reflect that had another—let us say, Dorothea—pointed out the high opportunity of protecting a damsel in peril, and of chivalrously accepting her story without comment, our Harry would have grasped it. Such imagination as he possessed would have reeled at the vision of himself in the world's lists, challenging all the champions of Christendom on behalf of his liege lady, an Ivanhoe ardent to risk life and honour for a despised and outcast Rebecca.

Napier said quietly, 'And so you replaced the Talin, hoping I should not discover that it had been taken?'

'Yes.' After a pause she said impulsively, 'And you believe me, you are still my friend?'

'I should be no friend,' he replied gravely, 'if I tried to make light of the terrible situation in which you have placed yourself, and Lord Camber, and me.'

Harry raised his head.

'What are you saying? What have I to do with this?'

Napier met his glance.

'If the facts are made public, some suspicion will attach itself to—you.'

'Are you stark, staring mad?'

Esther and Harry rose together. Esther was evidently confounded by Napier's words. Napier rose too, throwing down the pen which he had been twisting in his fingers. His preparations were complete. Nothing remained now but to operate, to expose, as swiftly and cleanly as possible, this man's soul, if he had one.

'I wish to make plain how this case may appear to others.' He turned to Harry. 'The charts are evidence that my patient's health steadily improved till you appeared. You have admitted to me—and doubtless to others—that your marriage was a blunder. It would be recalled that long ago you loved Miss Yorke and wished to marry her. If Lady Camber had recovered consciousness, a terrible scandal was inevitable. Is it possible you don't realise where you stand?'

The question need not have been asked. Harry, since a child, had never failed to see what others were kind enough to point out. He beheld himself, the most conspicuous figure in an august assembly, about to be tried by his peers, with a rope of silk dangling above his head.

Utterly confounded and upset, he almost screamed out: 'Before God, I swear that——'

'Lord Camber,' Napier's voice was icy, 'this is so unnecessary; I am not your judge.'

'Judge!' He wiped his forehead. 'I ask again—why should I be brought into this?'

'Motive is everything in such cases. Miss Yorke's motive for taking the Talin is a credible one.'

Harry answered violently, seeing himself pilloried, hearing his illustrious name defamed by newsboys:

'Of course it is credible. Why do you question it?'

'Personally, I do not question it.'

'Then what are we at? What is the meaning of this sort of inquisition, this harrowing up of Miss Yorke's feelings and mine?'

'I'll answer you. I know the exact quantity of Talin that was in the phial. I cannot sign the certificate till it has been demonstrated that the Talin has not been touched. I spent last night with a friend in the laboratory of the Society for Clinical

Research. The analysis was a delicate and tedious business. When I left this morning, the results were not yet summed up.'

'But you accept Miss Yorke's explanation?'

'I do.'

Harry stared at him. A reason, which justified a private inquiry, faintly illumined a befogged mind. This doctor, with a reputation at stake, admitted that he shrank from publicity. Impetuously he blurted out:

'Mr. Napier, sign that certificate. Sign it! Prove your faith in Miss Yorke, clear her of this damnable suspicion by signing it at once.'

'And what would *you* do to prove your faith in Miss Yorke's innocence?'

'Anything—anything.' He blundered on like an elephant in a morass. 'I'm a rich man, I'd give half my fortune to save—her.'

Napier smiled.

'Are you trying to bribe me, Lord Camber?'

'No, no, can't you see I'm distracted with misery? I'm not thinking of myself at all, only of her.'

A rough sincerity emphasised the words. For the first time during the interview Napier considered the possibility of having been mistaken in his estimate of Harry's true character. He addressed Esther.

'I wish to have a few words in private with Lord Camber. Will you go into the laboratory?'

'If you wish it.'

He accompanied her to the door, opening it. As she passed through she met Napier's eyes, still steadfastly kind. He had his back to Harry; and Esther caught the whisper, 'Courage!' Although she was perplexed, troubled indeed beyond expression, by Napier's methods, one fact stood out above all obscurities. His trust had never failed. She held her head higher as she entered the bare, whitewashed room, and a faint smile parted her lips.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PALADIN BEHOLDS HIMSELF AS HE IS.

NAPIER returned to his desk. Nor did he speak immediately. Camber's attitude indicated unconditional surrender and deflation. And Esther had witnessed this attenuation of a once 'splendid



specimen of manhood.' She saw him as he was. But the effect of the operation—for so Napier regarded it—on her, the woman who had loved Harry, puzzled the operator. She had looked on coldly. Her self-control aroused apprehension. Inwardly she must be seething with indignation. And left alone she might be tempted once more to snatch at oblivion. He rejoiced that he had altered the combination of the cabinet. Upon the other hand, her love might have survived the ordeal, quickened by the sight of Harry's misery and distress. And at the end his passionate affirmation of desiring to save her seemed to ring true.

But was it true ?

'Lord Camber,' he said. 'I know that so far as any possible administration of this drug is concerned *you* are innocent.'

Harry answered miserably, 'You have made me see how I stand, if any of the cursed drug has been taken.'

'It may relieve your mind to be told that Talin leaves no trace in the human system.'

'Leaves no trace—— ?'

'Till now it has defied my tests.'

'Do you mean—er—that in the event of an examination it would be beyond the power of science to say whether it had been used or not ?'

'I mean exactly that.'

'Then, then——' His mind groped for the conclusion to which he had been led, blindfold. 'Then a jury would have to give any accused person the benefit of the doubt ?'

'I think so.'

Harry dashed at the lure.

'In that case, I say again, sign the certificate.'

'You believe her to be absolutely innocent ?' said Napier.

'I am sure of it,' Harry replied hurriedly.

'On your honour ?'

'On my honour.'

Slowly Napier rose from his chair, and approaching our paladin held out his hand.

'Lord Camber, perhaps I have done you injustice. If I sign this certificate now, are you prepared to vindicate your belief in Miss Yorke's innocence ?'

Harry looked up. Could he have gazed into a glass, would he have recognised the famous cricketer and Imperialist in the sorry

figure staring confusedly at a man not half his size and with less than a quarter of his strength.

'V-v-vindicate?' he stammered.

'Yes.'

'How?'

'By marrying her in due time.'

Harry winced. Then, to gain a moment, he repeated the words, 'By marrying her?'

'Precisely. If your belief in Miss Yorke's innocence is strong enough to make you marry her, my belief in her, fortified by your act, would justify me, I think, in signing this certificate.'

Camber set his teeth. He had his back to the wall and knew it.

'Marry her?' he growled out again.

'It's the last word, Lord Camber.'

The poor fellow tried to temporise.

'You talk of marriage at such a time as this?'

'You were the first to speak of marriage. If Miss Yorke is the only woman in the world for you, and if you are convinced, as you affirm on your honour, that she is innocent, what bar is there to your marriage?'

'I won't marry her,' said Harry between his teeth.

'Then you don't believe in her innocence.'

The paladin exploded.

'Damn you! You don't believe in her innocence either!'

Napier replied with a smile. Beneath it Harry writhed, sensible that this man smiled, as if he, the mighty one, were of no more account than a pinch of snuff; and, with a quiver of terror, he vaguely understood that worse was to come, that this inquisitor held in reserve some other instrument of torture.

'Why do you look at me like that?' he asked with pitiable defiance.

'Miss Yorke is alone in the laboratory. The cabinet is in the laboratory.'

'The cabinet!'

'Don't you understand——?'

Harry recoiled.

'You wouldn't dare——!' He broke off, shuddering.

'If she is innocent,' said Napier solemnly, 'you are the last man in the world to blame me for what I have done.'

'You are fiendishly cold-blooded! Oh—it's too horrible. And

at this moment——!’ He groaned, then he said fiercely : ‘Open the door, sir. I insist!’

‘You can open it,’ said Napier.

‘I—I—dare not!’

‘Then I will.’

Napier walked to the door, opened it, and said in his ordinary voice, ‘Miss Yorke?’

Instantly, Esther came back into the library. Napier took her hand, and holding it addressed Harry.

‘Lord Camber, I need hardly say that I sent Miss Yorke into the laboratory to test you—not her.’

Harry gasped out : ‘To test—me?’

‘For one atrocious moment last night I thought she might be guilty. The motive, the opportunity, the circumstantial evidence overwhelmed me. But after the first shock I was willing to stake my life that Esther Yorke is incapable of wilfully injuring anyone except—herself.’

‘Thank you,’ said Esther, in a whisper.

Harry’s normal tone and manner returned to him.

‘But you don’t know for certain yet?’

Napier went to his desk and picked up the sealed envelope which Buckle had brought in.

‘The result is here,’ he said. ‘The phial contained exactly two fluid drachms and twenty-seven minims of Talin.’ He broke open the envelope, withdrew the enclosure and handed it with a slight bow to Esther.

‘Will you read it?’ he said gravely.

Esther read aloud : ‘The phial submitted to us for analysis contains two fluid drachms and twenty-seven minims of the new vegetable alkaloid, Talin.’

‘You have played a trick on me,’ said Harry loudly.

‘You played a trick on me yesterday. I planned this scene, Lord Camber, because I wanted to find out whether you were worthy of the woman I love.’

‘You love her?’ Harry exclaimed. ‘And you let her go in there?’

‘I changed the combination of the cabinet,’ Napier replied. ‘My late patient might have been a happy woman, but she married the wrong man. I love Miss Yorke too well to allow her to make a similar mistake. That is my justification for what I have done this morning.’

He spoke with extraordinary dignity, and the effect of his words upon our paladin was remarkable. At last he saw himself as these two persons saw him, stripped of his lion's skin, with never a roar left in him. And the shock of the vision nearly unbalanced a mind which disuse had somewhat atrophied. In his weakness he clutched at what was left. His big blue eyes turned beseechingly to Esther.

'You did love me,' he muttered, 'and I love you.'

'I never loved you,' said Esther gently. 'As a girl, I thought you were a hero—and I adored heroes!' She paused, recalling emotions and sensibilities dulled by years of adversity.

'You loved me when I came to you after your father's death.'

'I mistook pity for love. I could have loved you then, if—if you had not marked time. I ran away from Mont Plaisir because I did not love you. If I had really loved you I should have stayed whether you meant to marry me or not. For the third time in our lives you are willing to marry me, but, always, always, Harry, you have been too late.'

He had sense enough to realise that no further appeal was possible.

Happiness had hung within reach, but he had not stretched out his hands quick enough. Nobody would ever know it, except these two and himself, and we may venture to predict that this knowledge would turn the many gifts which the gods had showered upon him into galling burdens. He stared so piteously at Esther, that tears of sympathy filled her eyes.

'I wish I could help you,' she whispered.

He went out, abashed.

'Can you forgive me?' said Napier, as soon as they were alone. Then, without waiting for an answer, he added confusedly: 'I took for granted that you loved Lord Camber, otherwise I should not have exposed you to such an ordeal.'

'Before you say another word I must tell you everything. Even now you must think it astounding that I concealed so much which you ought to have known. But I owed him an enormous debt.'

Then she spoke, keeping nothing back, laying her life before him. Not even to Miranda had she so unveiled her inmost self. Nor was that self spared. The man listening to her understood the much that was said and the little left unsaid; for his own strength

had grown out of the weakness of the flesh. When she had finished he took her hand.

'I need not have altered the combination of the cabinet,' he muttered.

'That was quite unnecessary, but you did not know that I had promised to go back to Miranda.'

'And when will you come to me, Esther?'

'Come to you?'

'As my wife.'

She smiled.

'You have not even asked me if—if I care,' she whispered. Then, unwilling to keep him even an instant in suspense, she added: 'I do care. Perhaps I have always cared, ever since the first meeting. Your eyes haunted me, the eyes of the man who I thought was going to insult me, but whose only thought has been to help me.'

Outside, much snow had fallen. And through the snow Esther went to Miranda. London had draped itself in purest white, a virginal city awaiting the warm kisses of the sun. Very soon this bridal robe must be discarded as too fine for workaday uses; and Esther rejoiced that it was so. London in blackest fog, London in whitest snow, alike were unreal and fantastic, cities of illusion. Henceforward, though mirage might allure her, what was real and substantial and enduring would alone enthrall. And, henceforward, unbeguiled by outward appearance, however fair, she would strive to penetrate beneath the surface of men and things, in an ardent quest for the divine beauty obscured, but never altogether destroyed, by the careless hands of the children of men.

THE END.

### THE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE.

UNLIKE poets, successful politicians are both born *and* made. There are those, like the scions of the houses of Harcourt or Cecil or Stanley, who have lived in an atmosphere of public affairs from their cradles and there acquired a taste for politics with their mother's milk; for them a Parliamentary career seemed predestined, and by training, conscious or unconscious, they have through successive generations from their earliest days prepared themselves for it. Others there are, the circumstances of whose childhood never allowed either their parents or themselves to dream of a seat in the House of Commons as a possibility even in the distant future. Yet we need but to recall such names as those of Thomas Burt and Henry Broadhurst and Jesse Collings to prove that large sections of our nation have, over long periods of time, given their unswerving confidence to a type of man who, by his own steadfastness of conduct and character, has passed from the apprenticeship of manual labour and humble surroundings to the greater responsibilities of Parliament and the Privy Council. Between these two classes of M.P. there lies a large variety of men who reach the House of Commons without either an inherited instinct for political life or the acquired qualities which go to make a tribune of the people. There are, for example, but in steadily decreasing numbers, the eldest sons of peers and country gentlemen, who submit themselves to the ordeal of a general election without the faintest inclination or preparation for taking part in the councils of the nation. Constantly they are elected, and they make admirable 'party men'; the same spirit of duty and self-sacrifice, which impels them to give up lives of leisure and the gratification of pursuits very far removed from politics and confinement in London during the summer months, constrains them also to serve regularly on committees, to appear with praiseworthy punctuality in the division lobbies, and to avoid causing the 'whips' a moment's anxiety on account of any display of independent political thought or action. Then, again, every Parliament contains a number of men who find it profitable to their professions that they should be able to affix the letters M.P. to their patronymics. Primarily they are interested

in business and not in politics; nevertheless, once within the walls of Westminster, they manage to spare an enormous amount of time from the calling in which they are engaged and devote it to the affairs of the country. And, in the present Parliament, there is the distinctive feature of the 'professional politician,' a term which can now be used, happily, without offence or disrespect. He is sent to the House to represent his trades union or his federation, subscribing to a definite party programme, and his financial way is eased for him by the contributions of the faithful so long as he comports himself with due regard to his orders. Certainly no argument can be adduced against 'payment of Members' from the behaviour of the Labour party in the House of Commons, whose assiduity and attention to business must be a matter of congratulation to those whom they represent.

Such are a few of the types of Parliament men who have been candidates and who, probably in the near future, will be candidates again. They have certainly altered and developed in feature during the past half-century, much more so than the constituencies which they represent. There is still an idea (or a delusion), deep-rooted in the minds of innumerable voters, that a man can only be 'putting up for Parliament' in order to better himself in one way or another. That it should cost a good round sum of money to get elected at all, and a still further sum to keep a house in London while Parliament is sitting, to say nothing of the subscription list which figures perforce in the annual expenditure of candidate and member alike, never occurs to the average elector in a county constituency. The promise of a vote to a candidate is looked upon as a personal benefaction from the donor, for which the recipient can never be too grateful; it is in no sense an intimation that the voter is ready to entrust to another his share of citizenship towards the performance of a national duty which he—the labourer in the fields—could not possibly undertake, and would not if he could. I remember that, years ago, the late Sir Richard Temple stated this point of view in a speech which he delivered as a candidate, directly after he had returned post haste from his duties in India, arriving after his own contest had begun. He used words to the following effect: 'I have travelled 8,000 miles and surrendered 5,000*l.* a year for the privilege of representing this great constituency'; but the proper sense of his generosity and public spirit was entirely marred by a remark from a loud voice in the crowd, 'Oh, what a — fool you must be!'



Candidates have a very genuine respect for that 'voice in the crowd,' which upsets so many of their finest periods by an interjected remark. You are powerless in face of it; the lilt of your sentence is ruined. Your withering scorn is turned to laughter—and, after laughter, no retort appears effective. What, for instance, ought Lord George Hamilton to have said when, after questioning Mr. Gladstone's claim to the name of statesman, and describing the G.O.M. as 'a political adventurer who always had his eye on the Treasury bench,' 'the voice' answered 'Yes, and he'll have his body there soon if you don't watch it.'

Even Bernal Osborne, that witty and eloquent Irishman, was dumbfounded at a famous meeting in Waterford when the whole glamour of his glowing peroration upon patriotism and a soldier's duty was shattered by a wail from the gallery, 'Och, what's the world to a man if his wife's a widow?'

And 'the voice' is no respecter of pathos if it be of artificial production. An illustration of this occurs to me in another Irish incident. It was a leading member of the Irish Bar who was speaking; a man of burly physique and florid complexion. Eloquently he discoursed upon the woes and injustices of his native land, and, in the course of this magnificent effort, he managed to let a few tears trickle over his expansive red cheeks. 'Shure, boys,' remarked one of the audience, 'there's a fine field for hydraulics.'

But 'the voice' does not always win; and the candidate, whether born or made, is never so perfect that he cannot improve in his power of repartee. Several good stories come readily to hand, as I write these recollections of past politics, in which the would-be member has distinctly scored. In one agricultural division, some years ago, a well known 'dealer in game' was put up at the end of a meeting to heckle the candidate. His first question, unfortunately, was, 'Does Mr. X. consider hares to be vermin?' Mr. X., a resident in the neighbourhood, knew his man and replied, 'There are three classes of persons interested in this question, the landlord, the farmer, and the poacher. I see you are not a farmer, you don't look like a landlord—so I will proceed to answer some of the other questions.'

On another occasion, during the last General Election, one irate person in a certain audience kept calling out, with irritating persistency, 'We won't have our food taxed; no taxes on food.' At length the candidate, who had borne these explosions with the utmost composure for half an hour, said, in an audible aside,

'Console yourself, my friend; Joe isn't going to tax thistles.' At this point one might pause for a short dissertation on the courtesies of the platform, but I will content myself with saying that the same audiences, which would not tolerate unprovoked personalities from a speaker, will cheer his sallies to the echo if they administer due chastisement to a notorious offender. I well recollect a retort which, to my surprise, was backed by the enthusiastic applause of a large meeting. The proceedings were being constantly interrupted by the unmannerly ejaculations of an excited and inebriate politician in the corner of the hall. This person chiefly objected to the speaker because he was 'the son of a lord,' and persisted in asserting every few seconds, 'I'm's good as you; what'sh the diff'rence 'tween you'n me?' Suddenly the answer came: 'One difference is that you drink and don't work, and I work but don't drink.' The reply was so eminently just and apt that the entire audience endorsed it by acclamation, and the village toper was escorted from the scene. Even that peculiar product of modern times, Mr. Hunnable, has nothing to fear from the public if he rounds upon an unsportsmanlike assailant. Indeed, he gained no little *kudos* in his retort to a man who called out to him, 'Is it true that you were let out of an asylum on a doctor's certificate to fight this election?' To which Mr. H. replied, 'No, but it's more than any doctor would do for you.' Perhaps the most withering and the wittiest rejoinder which I ever heard on a political platform was that made in New York by Mr. Joseph Choate, who was then leader of the Bar in that city and afterwards became Ambassador in London. The occasion was an election in New York State, when 'Boss' Croker—who scarcely ever delivered a speech in public—was supposed to hold the fortunes of the poll within his hands at Tammany Hall. He had, however, spoken for an hour on the previous evening and (in the judgment of his opponents) had completely given away his case. Commenting upon this result of his inspired, if unusual, public utterance, Mr. Choate gravely said, 'Now, consider the case of Balaam's ass; before it spoke all men regarded it as quite an ordinary quadruped, but *after it had spoken* they discovered what an extraordinary ass it was.'

One great difference, which it is impossible not to notice, between platform speaking in America and in Great Britain is the enormous amount of attention that is given in the former country to the preparation of speeches as compared to that which is bestowed upon

similar utterances at home. Sonority of phrase and rivers of sentiment are the essential features of the average public speaker or 'spell-binder' over the water; they are not excluded from the orations of the chosen-of-the-people at Washington. In this country, with a few notable exceptions, the phrase-mongers are at a discount, and the prevailing sentiment is to 'cut the cackle and come to the 'osses.' It is probably the House of Commons which has set the fashion in this direction, by tabooing classical quotation and giving the shortest of shrift to sentimentality of whatever kind. I think it was Mr. Chamberlain, himself the ablest exponent of the new style of Parliamentary speaking, who once said that 'good smoking-room conversation' was the class of oratory that members now care most to hear. That this is the truth no one with experience of the Commons can possibly doubt; but it is permissible to wonder whether, at rare intervals, our legislators would not still be refreshed and instructed by the eloquent and classical outpourings of a Gladstone, a Gathorne-Hardy, or a Plunkett. However, the business style of speaking now finds favour in the constituencies also, and there is much less need for the expenditure of midnight oil upon literary form and diction than there used to be. 'Horse sense,' nevertheless, is insisted upon, and a certain simplicity of speech setting forth well-ordered ideas should be the aim of every candidate no matter what audience he is addressing. To achieve this object there is no practice like that of speaking constantly to village audiences in remote country districts, where political ignorance is both natural and prevalent, and where things want explaining from the very beginning; though very few communities can be so backward as one hamlet (of which I heard in 1906) which, although Tory to the backbone, voted for a Home Rule candidate in the belief that Home Rule was a measure to enable the Government to keep Irishmen at home, *i.e.* out of the English fields at harvest time. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that 'anything will do' for a rustic audience; it is the most difficult of all, if any permanent good is to be the outcome of the speech. The dialectical and the high-falutin' arguments pass over the labourer's head like the clouds in the sky; the halting and shapeless address leaves confusion worse confounded; statistics and quotations at first puzzle him and finally send him to sleep. Mr. Gladstone's well-known recipe for a single speech is more certain of success in a village than anywhere else: 'Choose three subjects and deal with each of them three times over.' For town audiences, no doubt, greater political

knowledge and experience are necessary than in agricultural districts, where the one political instinct is to vote 'blue' or 'yellow, as my fayther did afore me'; but when these qualities are acquired, and a reasonable fluency of words can be depended upon, it matters little whether the speaker uses full notes or none, tells stories or forgets them, or whether he accompanies his words with appropriate gesture or only grasps the lapels of his coat the while he is on his legs.

But let nobody suppose that a candidate's chief duty is accomplished when he has made his round of appearances upon the platforms in the constituency which one day he hopes to call his own. There are many other functions which that humble political instrument is expected to perform before his chances at the poll are to be favourably computed. He must be ready to open bazaars, whereat he will see many faces that never attend a public meeting; he must go to smoking concerts and 'oblige with a song' if he has any gifts in that direction; the market ordinaries and the corn exchange will expect him in a rural neighbourhood; the football match and the bowling green will have their compulsory seduction for him in the vicinity of city or town. All of these, with other attractions too numerous to mention, combine to impose a considerable tax—however cheerfully met—upon the time and resources of the ordinary run of candidate who has other occupations or ties in life; but they pale before the task of 'house-to-house canvassing' which is still expected in many districts both of town and country. You require a particular temperament to carry out this preliminary with anything approaching to success. You must not mind putting yourself, 'for the good of the cause,' in the category of more regular and rapacious visitors, some of whom are knocking at the doors of the poor every day in the week. Only the other day a friend of mine was out in search of votes in a back street; for some time he was sternly refused admittance, but when he finally got in his host admitted that he had mistaken the candidate for the rate collector! And you must be prepared for some very plain speaking, which you can scarcely resent—being but an unbidden guest. 'Ah, that's what you're after,' said one old fellow to a colleague of the present writer; 'I thought as much, for you never comes nigh me 'cept at votin' toime.' But, in the majority of cases where this form of electioneering is the accepted practice, a great deal of useful information is both given and received. Such was, I believe, the experience of a candidate at a recent bye-election in Lincoln

shire when he applied to a genial son of the soil for his 'vote and interest.' The old man received the aspirant with every courtesy, but, said he, 'No, no; I can't vote for you, as you're in with Squire Chaplin.' 'Well,' said my friend, 'what of that; he's always been the farmer's ally, hasn't he?' 'Ah, yes,' was the answer, 'but he's gone Protection now, and I don't hold with this compulsory vaccination.' It was a new view that 'Protection' is a measure against smallpox! Upon a similar kind of occasion, when engaged in quest of suffrages, another young man—a Liberal Unionist—was politely denied support by a clergyman who said that he 'could not vote for anyone who followed a leader (i.e. Mr. Chamberlain) tainted with a Socinian heresy.' In the fulness of time the candidate married, and a son was born to him. Among many letters of congratulation he received one from this worthy divine, now assuring him of hearty support and good will since he 'was blessed of the Lord in that his first-born was a male child.' I do not know whether these amusing incidents will be diminished or increased when we have to canvass the ladies as well as the men. Personally I shall rather shrink from the encounter if many women take the view of one dame who was asked to secure her husband's vote for the candidate, 'who is strongly in favour of female suffrage, by the way.' It was a bad shot; for the wife replied, 'Oh, he wants to make us do all the housework for the men and vote for them as well, does he; *no thank you.*'

I said at the beginning of this paper that in my judgment the type of representative in Parliament had changed of late years a good deal more than had the constituencies which elected them. By that I meant, of course, in personal characteristics; for in other respects—notably in the conduct of elections—the alteration has been a radical one indeed. It used to be by no means infrequent to hear of a fair number of hostile voters incarcerated by the ingenuity of one side or the other in some place of safety until the poll was closed. That is now a feature of the past, although, curiously enough, I heard of an instance of it during the General Election in Italy last spring. There was a certain agitator taking part in one of the contests in Rome, and a great deal was supposed to depend upon his activity among the extremists on the night before the poll. Upon that last afternoon, therefore, he was closely shadowed by his opponents and, when darkness fell, he was set upon, bound, blindfolded, and led by a circuitous route into a disused chamber in the house of the very individual whose downfall

he was engaged to compass. All this was done by the enterprise of a few daring spirits and without the cognisance of the candidate who proved victorious. Missing the well-known face, and the expected extravagances of this agitator at the demonstration which took place beneath his windows after the result was declared, my friend inquired of his supporters, 'But where is Signor Z.?' I fully expected he would be leading the opposition outside.' On hearing that his prisoner was languishing below stairs, the victor at once ran down to liberate him, and, to his intense astonishment, was heartily congratulated by his erstwhile prisoner on his most successful political manœuvre.

Again, since the passing of the Corrupt Practices Act, the expenses of an election are enormously reduced, though instances might be quoted to show that in many cases the conduct of a contest makes an inroad never contemplated by Parliament upon the pocket of a candidate. At the same time, 'the good old days' of cash down for votes received are gone, never to return, and a good riddance to them. I was reminded the other day of a famous case of this kind by an old electioneerer in the borough of A.B., where a rich candidate was standing in the Tory interest against a poor 'gentleman of title' on the Whig side. The Tory began by giving great umbrage when he declined to go through the traditional formality of transferring (by an unknown hand) to an emissary from the constituency a bag of sovereigns, out of which the proletariat was to be 'sweetened' after the party-leaders had remunerated themselves. This was bad enough, but worse followed when the same candidate declared that he meant to fight on strictly legal lines. Such an assertion was treated at first with polite incredulity, an attitude which deepened to positive hostility as he showed that he meant to stick to his guns. This was made evident when, on the eve of the election, his agent paid his usual visit to the various committee rooms to give final instructions about vehicles, &c., for the following day. He began his remarks; but the chairman at once interrupted him politely, and explained that other important matters connected with the election were far more pressing; hinting not obscurely that the distribution of *largesse* was nearest to their minds in that room at that moment. Sadly but firmly the agent shook his head and said there would be no *largesse*; whereupon the committee resigned in a body, stating that they could take no responsibility for an election conducted on such unorthodox lines. The morrow came, but there were no signs of



local activity on the Tory side ; the committee rooms were closed, and, up till two o'clock, very few ' blues ' had voted. They were waiting for the traditional generosity of the last two hours before the poll closed at 4 P.M.—hoping against hope. Three o'clock came, and with it word that, in a certain place, forty voters could be found ready, nay willing, to vote at the absurdly reduced rate of 2s. 6d. per head. But the candidate stood firm and declined to be tempted, even by a falling market ; though, to be sure, it was pointed out that, since neither side would bribe, the best thing would be to vote for the rich man in the lively expectation of favours to come. So in the end victory was achieved for constitutional principles by ' the unbought suffrages of an enlightened constituency.'

I suppose it will be charged against me that I am a *laudator temporis acti* when I say that the life of a candidate promises to be much less interesting to himself in the future than it used to be in the days of the generation gone by. The excitement of the hustings is become a legend ; the electioneering ruses already referred to hang in the armoury of antiquated political instruments ; house-to-house visitations are dying out, and public meetings no longer convince or convert anyone. In fact these last-named forms of political instruction are more and more regarded as entertainments, to which enormous crowds will be drawn if the speaker's name, like an actor's, is a guarantee of a good hour's sport, but to which wild horses cannot drag them for the mere sake of education in public affairs. Life is too full nowadays ; we are all too anxious to be doing ' something else ' ; our main thought at a meeting is ' how soon can I decently get away ? ' We wish we had the moral courage of the hero who, from the most crowded corner of a densely packed demonstration, demanded in stentorian tones an answer to his oft-repeated question, ' What did Mr. Gladstone say in 1881 ? ' a query which he reiterated with such frequency that he was finally lifted by stewards over the heads of his companions and ejected into the street. Once outside the building, a well-meaning sympathiser inquired of him : ' Well, now, what *did* Mr. Gladstone say in 1881 ? '

' Hang it, man,' was the reply, ' I don't know and I don't care ; but I should have fainted if I had not been lifted out of that horrible room.'

And, finally, it seems as though the Bill recently passed through Parliament for the prevention of disturbances at public meetings will deprive the candidate of the last remnant of legitimate excite-



ment in connection with his candidature. Henceforth he will be unable to anticipate the rush and capture of his platform by an organised opposition, an experience upon which I look back with unalloyed amusement; he will not need to fear the intrepid heckler, who always had it in his power to turn a meeting into a bear-garden if he was strongly supported; he will be inclined to circulate instead of to deliver his speeches, and his constituents will be equally tempted to 'take them as read.' I dare say, however, that nobody will in the long run be any the worse for all these innovations, and that the candidate who best accommodates his manners to the moving times and disposes of his political knowledge through the most effective channels that may be open to him will, if he possesses character and grit—two essentials in the eyes of every electorate—sooner or later attain that most honourable of all elective positions, a seat in the British House of Commons.

IAN MALCOLM.

### *A SPOILER AT NOONDAY.*

THE affair was never officially reported. For this omission there were, no doubt, certain very good reasons. It is doubtful, too, whether house-dwelling people ever came into possession of any of the facts, but round every Romany camp-fire, from the Cheviots to the Channel, the tale was told hilariously and without loss of a single detail, as a matter of great glory to the race.

This was the beginning of it. Napoleon, the son of Napoleon, and his aunt Dorelia were sitting under a hawthorn bush, out of the sun, and the road glared white, away and away, north and south, between great woods.

'Wake up, Bibi' (aunt), 'dere's a man comin.' Napoleon, reached out a dusty hand and pulled his aunt's black plait under the yellow head-kerchief. Aunt Dorelia woke up with a start.

'Oh, you plaguesome child, leave me alone! I'm as sleepy as de seven sleepers with all de cider I've drunk at dat farm.'

Aunt Dorelia showed the alien, the true child of the 'Kâli' (the dark people), in most of her sentences. She could never for the life of her capture the elusive 'th' sound of the English tongue.

'It's a man, my aunt,' repeated Napoleon. 'He walks for all de world like as if he had a stick up his coat back. He is looking at us an evil look, my aunt.'

Aunt Dorelia sat bolt upright, and stared down the road.

'Boy, it's a prasterméngero (policeman),' she whispered. 'Mi-duvelésti, how I scorn and despise them.'

The policeman came to a stand on the road in front of them.

'So you've come into these parts again, have you?' he said. 'I thought we had learnt you Boswells plain enough last year that you are not wanted hereabouts. You had far best keep yourselves away.'

Aunt Dorelia eyed him with a steely look.

'Mister,' she said, 'for civil and decent people keep a civil and decent language. We aren't doin' anyone no harm, and we aren't a-thinkin' none. As to us bein' any of Boswell's lot, I haven't seen one of them for a twelvemonth this side the Thames water. See now, man, I've got my hawkin' licence here, for you or anyone

to see, and we aren't doin' no harm to your beat by sittin' lookin' at it. So don't be a-harassin' of us when there is no cause for it.'

The policeman muttered something about the large possibility of her being worse than a Boswell if, indeed, she did not happen to be one; but, thinking of nothing further to say, he scowled ferociously for a long while, as who should say: 'Don't think to deceive me, my good girl,' and then he went his heavy way down the road at the regulation two miles an hour, and was lost to sight.

'What's that man, Aunt Dori?' asked Napoleon.

'Dat's a serpent, Poley,' she replied, settling herself down again. 'Dere's other serpents that crawl in de grass. Dem sort crawl on de road. Their minds is bad. They're all for 'stroyin' our dear people. Some of us is foolish and makes favour with them, but it brings no manner of good—never. For me, I'd scorn to put any discourse on them but lies. Now listen, Poley, listen and mind these words, long as you do live.'

She sat up and looked at him. Her eyes grew small and had a little point of fire in each of them; and, as she looked, she held him in the grip of her eyes.

'Now, boy, just you harken, and say all this after me. "I, Poley Boswell——"'

'I, Poley Boswell,'

'"Son of Poley Boswell——"'

'Son of Poley Boswell,'

'"Promise on oath——"'

'Promise on oath,'

'"Never to speak to policemen——"'

'Never to speak to policemen,'

'"Without tellin' 'em a lie."'

'Without tellin' 'em a lie.'

'"For ever never, Amen."'

'For ever never, Amen.' After a little pause. 'What do you mean, my Aunt, "without tellin' 'em a lie"?'

'Bless de boy! What a thing to ask! Why, a lie is de furthestest travellin' from de dear God's truth you ever can go. You just say "It isn't" when for certain sure it is. And when it isn't, you'll say you've got it in your very hands. The furthestest from God's truth you can get to.'

Poley deliberated. 'I see, Aunt,' he said; and from that day he felt a pleasurable certainty that he knew the nature of a lie, and that of such must be all intercourse with policemen.

Aunt Dorelia and Poley were always the very best of friends. He liked her better than anyone in the tents. He often accompanied her on her rounds, and stood by wondering as she dispensed fortunes. She called him her little 'pirëno' (sweetheart), but he knew he was not really that. Her real sweetheart was splendid Uncle Gilderoy Lovell. Poley had not often seen this Uncle Gilderoy, but when he had come to his father's tents, Poley was immensely impressed. For Gilderoy was tall and straight and powerful. His clothes were always in a remarkable state of repair. The buttons on his coat glistened like stars in the firmament, and he wore rings on his fingers like any woman. Poley noticed that other men friends were invariably civil to Gilderoy, when his caravan came along, and never swore at him or chaffed him—not even when they had all got a little drunk together after a fair. He was the god that filled Poley's Olympus.

He used to try and talk to Aunt Dorelia about this god, but she did not say much—only kiss him gently, and tell him that he must be quick and grow up fine and tall like him, and then perhaps he would let him ride his horses to the fair. Beyond that, she was uncommunicative.

No creature on God's earth is so full of moods as a gypsy. No place so full of moods as a gypsy camp. Especially noteworthy among these camp-moods are three—the Rollicking, the Reposeful, and the Apprehensive. The first of these Poley loved. The second made him sleepy. The third made him extremely cross. He never knew what all the mystery was about. At such times he discovered himself entirely unimportant, and he experienced the unparalleled discomfort of being always in the way of people in a hurry.

It was on one of these days, when the mood Apprehensive lay heavily upon the camp, that Poley sat, brooding over his wrongs, literally among the ashes, where the camp-fire had been allowed to burn out. He had been trodden on heavily by his father on the caravan steps, and his Aunt Dorelia had sworn at him instead of comforting him. All life seemed to him like the ashes of a dead camp-fire. Suddenly he saw, through tear-swollen eyes, the astounding sight of Uncle Gilderoy limping feebly into the camp—that same Uncle Gilderoy who always seemed to him to walk proudly, like the Lord Mayor of all England. And now he came tottering forward, and sat suddenly down in the straw, his face low down between his knees. You could hardly see the colour of his clothes for dust, and when he called out, 'Dorelia, Dorelia,' his

voice was husky ; you could hardly hear it. Dorelia was on her knees by his side in a moment, pushing back the damp hair from his forehead and speaking quick, low words to him. The rest came swiftly up, one by one, till there was quite a small crowd surrounding him. Consequently Poley could not see much. What he heard was mainly low, rapid Romany talk, of which he could understand but little yet. Such sentences as these were interesting, but not very illuminating : ' The horse wasn't his. No, it wasn't '— ' Left him all in blood, and callin' out " I'm dyin' " '— ' Five of them runnin' after him, and de night was as black as a piece of coal '— ' Oh, de dear Lord, what a runnin' ! ' Then Poley tried to improve his position by creeping between the people's legs into the front row, but in the effort he got entangled in his mother's skirts, and nearly overturned her into the straw. Whereupon he was abused and cuffed by all within reach, so that he was glad to crawl out of the way and make good his escape. Disconsolate, he sat down at the opening of a little passage among the tall bracken, where the light was green and cool. He caught sight of consolation in its mysterious recesses, and he crept down the passage like a rabbit. It was good to be away from tents where he was suddenly of so little account, and he had the world before him. So he trailed leisurely along narrow tracks, the glorious uncertainties of their winding course tempting him further and further from the camp. At last he stood on the broad expanse of a high road, and there he sat him down contentedly on an ant-hill, in delightful anticipation of watching passing motor cars, without let or hindrance. But suddenly he discovered that he was not alone. Two tall men stood eyeing him from above. Poley eyed them from below. One man, he noted, was ponderous in breadth of person and of boot, and his garb was blue.

There was no doubt about this man's category. He was unquestionably a ' serpent of the roads. ' As to the other, who stood leaning on a bicycle, Napoleon felt in some doubt. However, he noted that in bulk and build his appearance was unsatisfactory, and, in spite of the quite inoffensive suit of clothes he wore, Poley decided that it behoved him to be on his guard towards this individual also. It was this man, with sober clothes and the subdued voice, who broke the silence.

' Hallo ! Sonny. So you've got into these parts again, have you ? And where do you happen to have got your van to-day, eh ? Not so far from here now, I dare say. '

He spoke so altogether amiably and so unlike the natural policeman that, for one perilous moment, Poley felt inclined to be communicative; but just in time there flashed across his mind Aunt Dorelia's admonition on the prevailing power of the lie. Therefore in reply, with one eye upon the serpent, he pointed a dirty finger into a safe and distant quarter of the heavens. The man in black and the man in blue looked at each other in some perplexity.

'Now look 'ere——' began the indubitable policeman fiercely, taking a threatening step towards Napoleon.

'Don't be so 'asty, now—don't you be so 'asty, Trumper,' said the other, with an air of lofty reproof; and then, in more ingratiating accents:

'Now, Sonny, you're a good lad. I can see you are. I am wanting to go and see your father, and I just want you to take me to him—quick. You see, your father and me's old friends. Wonderful what feelin' there is between your father and me. Him and me and your uncle too—Uncle Gilderoy; and I wants us all to meet together straight away. I dare say, now, it isn't so long since you've been seein' your Uncle Gilderoy, eh? Is it?'

Napoleon paused painfully to think, and then said slowly:

'I havn't ever seed no Uncle Gilderoy.'

The devoted friend of Poley's father scratched his head thoughtfully, but P.C. Trumper boiled over.

'There now, 'e's lyin', I tell you! 'E's lyin' and deceivin' us. What 'e wants to get the truth out of 'im is——'

'Can't you keep quiet, Trumper? That's all I asks of you,' the other said with dignity. 'You ain't got no hartifice about you—no hartifice for a thing of this sort. Just you leave it to me now, and don't you be interferin'.' Then he turned beamingly on Napoleon. 'Well, my boy, I can see as you are a werry clever little boy, a werry clever as well as a werry good boy, and you are thinkin' perhaps that we are after doin' a mischief to your dear father, or to your dear uncle very like. But I tell you all we wishes for them is to do them good. All we wishes for them is a quiet an' 'appy life. Quiet and 'appy. See? So don't you be makin' any mistakes and be tellin' us things as isn't true about my two friends.'

Poley contemplated him from the ant-hill. It was hard to write down this man, so remarkably amiable and well-behaved—a serpent of the roads, and in the few moments of silence, Poley

came as near to having a headache as ever he had been in all his life, trying to penetrate to the bottom of things. But his perplexity was dispelled by the intrusion of the irascible Trumper.

'If you don't see you're a-wastin' your time, Stackpole, you're a fool. Why, anybody can see as 'e's dissemblin', and 'e's sulky. What I say is—a stick about 'im——'

But Mr. Stackpole calmly ignored the interruption. He broadened his paternal smile and continued to nod reassuringly to Poley. It was, however, in vain now that he held Mr. Trumper out of the field by the sway of his heavy shoulders. Poley had heard the word 'Stick,' and the word 'Stick' was an unmasking of the enemy, and Poley knew with whom he had to deal.

'Well now, Sonny,' the pleasant tones of Mr. Stackpole flowed on, 'if you don't believe me, I've got along with me 'ere a fine present for your Uncle Gilderoy, a present that will make him clasp his hands with joy; the best present in the world for 'im, and I've been seekin' round for 'im for days and days to give it 'im.'

'Show me it,' said Poley suspiciously.

'Well,' said Mr. Stackpole, with caution, 'I don't mind if I do, though it's a thing I don't show to everybody. It's a most beautiful pair of rings—silver rings for his wrists—just like your mother and the rest of 'em wears, only larger, of course, for a man.'

He dived into his side pocket, and brought out exactly what he had described, a pair of shiny rings, which he dangled before Poley's eyes. They were linked together, which struck Napoleon as a little odd, none the less they looked distinctly decorative, and Poley gazed upon Mr. Stackpole's gift with admiration.

'And now, my boy, that you've seen what I've got to give 'im, and know how pleased he'll be, I'll just ask you to take me to your Uncle Gilderoy, as quick as you can, by the very same way you came up from your father's van. For it's my belief that your uncle has just come down here to see your father on a little visit.'

Now Napoleon's brief experience of life had told him of the dangers that often lurk within the fairest gifts. He looked therefore well at the rings of bright steel dangling in Mr. Stackpole's fingers. He looked up at his radiant face, but still ever, over Mr. Stackpole's shoulder, peered the small eyes of Mr. Trumper, and those eyes told unmistakably of war within the heart. Still Napoleon was in a most painful dilemma. For to renounce his Uncle Gilderoy would doubtless mean that the attractive tribute of Mr. Stackpole's affection would never come into his uncle's possession; whereas,



to lead the hateful Trumper straightway to the tents would be a deep transgression of Aunt Dorelia's commandment.

Poley breathed heavily and watched a crow uncertainly hovering in the air above the tree tops. By the time that the crow had alighted on a branch Poley had made up his mind.

He struggled slowly up from the ant-hill.

'Come on,' said he. Then he took Mr. Stackpole's proffered hand, and, turning his back on his father's caravans, he set off, with the two at his heels, down a side lane in exactly the opposite direction from the path by which he had found his way into the road.

The camp of the Romany wore an air of suppressed excitement as evening drew on. It was a silent and tense group that crouched round the camp-fire, which was kept low and only dimly smouldering, for fear of the rising of tell-tale smoke above the trees.

Uncle Gilderoy lay heavily asleep in the deeper shadows of the tent. But a further cause of anxiety had arisen. Young Napoleon had disappeared and had been missing from the tents for more than three hours.

Aunt Dorelia divided the minutes between watching over the sleeper in the tent and an anxious contemplation of the darkening lane. Under the trees Napoleon's mother walked to and fro with clasped fingers, softly calling, 'Poley, where are you got to, Poley?'

The shadows lengthened, and thicket and bush and winding track were caught, one by one, into the solemn sleep of the woods. Every disappearing patch of sunlight made Mrs. Boswell shiver. Every tree that was claimed by the shadows made her quicken her step up and down the lane. Still she kept up her low cry, 'Poley, Poley, where are you got to?' Then the sun sank right down behind the trees, and the woods lay in twilight. Twilight gave place to darkness, and with the darkness there came a little lonely figure, winding in and out among the great trunks of the trees. Mrs. Boswell gave a scream of joy. 'Oh, my dear, blessed boy! Oh, my dear, blessed little boy! What have you been a-doing?' And she ran and stooped to catch him in her open arms.

Strongly reminiscent of the way in which Uncle Gilderoy had entered the camp in the morning, was the manner of Napoleon's entrance at nightfall. Gilderoy had moved unsteadily on his feet. Poley simply staggered as if he were drunk. Gilderoy's breath had come in short and quick puffs. Poley's ragged coat simply heaved with the pantings of his heart. There had been a curious hunted

look in Gilderoy's eyes. Poley's eyes were rolling wildly, but closed under tremulous lids, when the women's hands had seized him.

Then came the chorus.

'Oh, de dear Lord! Where has de blessed boy been? We've been half crazy 'bout you. Wherever in de world, 'Poleon, did you get to?'

Then he opened his eyes, and gazed vacantly round the ring of faces and round the camp till his eye fell upon the teapot. When a good deal of pleasant warm tea had flowed down his throat, he raised himself painfully.

'I've been through the woods to the Public,' he answered.

'Dordi! Whatever did you go there for, boy?'

'I've been gone to get a present for Uncle Gilderoy.'

'Whatever do you talk like that for? What does de strange boy mean?'

'I got *these*——' he said, and he dragged out of his pocket the glittering token of Mr. Stackpole's regard for his absent friend. A solemn awe-struck silence fell upon the gypsies, a silence and a rigidity, and every eye seemed frozen to the object Poley was holding out in his hands.

'My dear Lord God! Handcuffs!' broke out the elder Napoleon, leaping to his feet, and kicking over his mug of beer in his haste, sending it hissing into the ashes.

'Where, in de dear Lord's name, did you get them cussed things?' he demanded hoarsely.

'I got 'em off a prasterméngero,' Poley whimpered, with a fist in his eye, for this was not exactly the popularity he had anticipated. 'The prasterméngero told me he was bringing them along for Uncle Gilderoy, as he was a friend of his. 'Deed, my dad, dat's de truth.'

'Ho! Gilderoy, Gilderoy, atch apré!' (wake up), screamed Aunt Dorelia, tumbling Poley hurriedly off her knees, where he had found a comfortable resting-place. She shook herself free from him and ran to the tent door. 'Here's the prastermengeri after you, and quite nigh the place, and the little Poley has brought in a pair of handcuffs he's got off them. Make haste, my Gilderoy, and don't lose a blessed minute!'

Then Gilderoy put his head out of the tent, and looked cheerfully round him. Strange to say, he was once more the splendid Gilderoy of old. The boldness of his face had returned to him again. He wore the old look of gay serenity. And he stood in the tent door, chuckling softly.

'Oh, go! Go, Gilderoy!' cried Aunt Dorelia, getting hold of his arm. 'You've no time to stand there laughin' like that. They'll be here after you in the leastest minute, very like. You're very near crazy, man!'

'Not I go, my girl,' he said, shaking her appealing hand off his arm. 'Not I go, till young Poley has told me how he came by these 'ere things. How was it, brother?'

'I chored (stole) 'em!' said Poley, with a ring of conscious pride in his voice.

'Where?'

'I just told you! It was on the bench by the "Red Lion" Public.'

'Dear Lord! And how did you get there—all that way off?'

'I took 'em out there—them two policemen. They said they were a-wanting you, to give you those fine bracelets, and so I took 'em right down towards the Public.'

'And why, in mi duvel's name, did you take 'em there?'

''Cause Aunt Dorelia said I was always to lie to 'em,' Poley made reply.

'Lor!' cried Aunt Dorelia, aghast.

'Well, brother, and when you come to the Public?'

'Oh, then they went in and swore most awful as I had led 'em wrong. And then they said bad, terrible things to me about not movin' off that bench, and they frightened me near out of my life.'

'And them handcuffs?'

'They was in the man's pocket, and the man's coat was on the bench. You see he'd been a mendin' of his ole broken bike before he went in to drink.'

'And then?'

'Oh, then I just happened kick against his coat and heard them things rattle inside, and so I just fetched them out of his pocket. After that, didn't I just run and run! They took after me, too, I know, 'cause I heard 'em come running up the road, like as they was mad—just by where I was hid.'

'Oh, my blessed boy! Weren't you really too 'fraid of the men to do all that?' cried his mother with wide open eyes.

Poley thought. Afraid? Yes! Hadn't he just been afraid, nearly shook himself out of his boots with fear? But what other line of action had been left to him, and what other pathway lay open

at once to loyalty and to safety? But he could not explain all that. Therefore he only said,

'Well, they was Uncle Gilderoy's own things, wasn't they? The man said so his-self.'

'Is that all truth, 'Poleon, you're talking—the dear God's truth?' cried his father, catching him by the coat collar and shaking him excitedly in his grasp.

'Oh, my dad, yes. It's true as my blessed eyes. Isn't them the bracelets there to show?' and Poley began to whimper a little. But Uncle Gilderoy burst out with a great laugh, and he picked Poley up from the ground and held him shoulder high.

'Ho! Ho, Poley! you're a fine great choréngero (thief) for your size,' he laughed. 'You and me together, brother, you and me together are good to beat all the mischief of all the prastermengeri of this 'ere county. Give me them "wastengeri" now, little Poley, if so be they're mine.'

'Oh, go, Gilderoy! 'Deed you must go!' cried Dorelia. She was all the time straining her ears to hear sounds of pursuers coming in upon them from the woods.

Gilderoy gave a last lingering look at the spoil from the enemy's land, and then he put his arm about Dorelia, and with the other hand, slipped one handcuff over her wrist. Then he said in a low voice, for her ear alone, 'Well, I'm off now, my girl, but you can keep them fine stolen goods for me, and when next you and me meet, I'll fasten you to me tighter nor ever them there handcuffs could fasten us, and that's true as my dad. So, good-bye, my girl.'

He stooped down, and slipped in among the tall bracken, and was quickly lost to sight among the gathering shadows of the wood. Then, with a small sigh, Dorelia departed with the handcuffs into the caravan.

The Romany were on the road betimes next day, and were slipping quickly and quietly along the narrower and more remote roads of the woodland country. Mrs. Boswell peered with nervous eyes down every lane they crossed, and into the gaps in the hedge-rows.

'Now, don't you be 'fraid, woman,' called Napoleon the elder, from the caravan shaft, 'and don't you go on like that. There ain't no fear for our little Poley.'

'I can't help it, man,' she said tearfully. 'It were such a terrible thing for him to do. I can't help being frightened.'

'You're a foolish woman,' he replied, scornfully. 'It's not in

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reason they'll think of having the law upon him about the handcuffs. You can take my word for gospel on that. Why, they darn't say anywhere one blessed little word about what they've lost. They know better.'

But he had hardly emphasised his words with a scornful expectoration when the sudden apparition of two policemen, standing in the middle of the roadway, made him blaspheme with astonishment low down in his throat; but his countenance remained unmoved and serene.

'Good mornin', gentlemen,' said Napoleon civilly.

'Don't you "good mornin'" me, Boswell,' said Mr. Trumper, the irate. 'We'll just trouble you to hand over that brother of yours, and make no bother about it. I've got a bit of paper for him here, wanting him perticular.'

'Maybe you *do* want him, mister, and so do I,' said Napoleon Boswell imperturbably. 'You see he owes me a bit of money—not a little bit neither—and if you gentlemen would just be so good as to find him for me, I'd take it as a kindness. Anyways, he ain't here, and what's more, I don't know on God's earth where 'bouts he is.'

'That's as it may be, Boswell,' said Stackpole. 'We'll see.'

'Well, have a look then?' said Boswell cheerily.

Whether the police officers expected to find little or much, they found nothing, and after a grim and profound search through the caravans, they confronted Boswell again.

'Now, Boswell, there's another small matter we've got between us,' said Stackpole. 'There's a pair of handcuffs of mine as one of them young fox cubs of yours stole from me yesterday. I'll trouble you to hand them straight over now, without any of your prevarication.'

Mr. Napoleon Boswell's countenance expressed the blankest astonishment, and his wife laughed a mocking incredulous laugh from the caravan.

'Handcuffs! What is de foolish man talking of?' she cried. 'Like as if we had any sort of use for them villainous things in our trade. Keep them for your own beautiful business, and go your ways.'

'I tell you, Mrs. Boswell, a son of yours picked my pocket of them yesterday,' asserted Mr. Stackpole obstinately, 'yesterday afternoon at about three o'clock.'

Mrs. Boswell stared, and then she suddenly raised her voice to a scream—and the scream of an infuriated gypsy woman is a truly

awesome thing to hear—‘That’s a lie, P’lice Constable! That’s a blazin’ lie you’re tellin’ me! You dropped ’em in the road yourself, you did, and you knows it; and it’s all in keepin’ with your black ways of wickedness blamin’ on innocent people things you’ve done out of your own falseness! Oh, yes, I know you, and the mischief in your minds. I know the mother of you, and she—

But the police were spared the pain of hearing the history of their mothers, according to Mrs. Boswell, by the intervention of her spouse, who broke in with less vehemence.

‘Why, look here now, our son, he’s a little lad there, lyin’ asleep in the wagon. Go and look at ’im again if you like—not seven years old and sleeping as innocent as a daisy. Just you dare tell that story of yours in full Court—tell it in the court, I say—that that tender hinfant up and stole your handcuffs off you, and what do you suppose would happen? Three months for him? No, by the Lord, but years and years and double years of scorn for you. Why, you’d never hear the end of it till you were safe in your coffins.’

Mr. Trumper opened his mouth wide to reply, but paused to charge the battery adequately, and Mr. Boswell rushed into the gap. ‘Don’t you talk any more! I won’t hear nothin’ about it. ’Tain’t likely we can stop here on the road talkin’ such foolishness with you. We’ve got to be at Horton Fair, so off you go, gentlemen, and look for the handcuffs in the ditch where you lost ’em. If so be you don’t find ’em, you’ll find us right enough on the fair ground. Then you can arrest that powerful six-year-old ruffian there if you’ve a mind to.’

Then he took the reins in his fingers, smacked his horse emphatically on the shoulder, and the caravan creaked on its way. Once or twice Mrs. Boswell was discerned, amiably waving a duster from the caravan window.

The policemen never moved. Mr. Trumper glared a while after the derisive duster, and then turned ferociously upon the disconsolate Stackpole. ‘I always told you that you were no better than a fool, with all your hartifices and stratgeries,’ he thundered. ‘It’s just them things as will get you into serious trouble some day—a trouble worse nor this ’ere now, if you don’t take a deal more care. It’s true what Boswell says. You daren’t say a word about it, you know you daren’t, and this ’ere hincident has been played right through, now for ever.’

The caravan disappeared round a bend of the road.

The handcuffs found a final resting-place in the shadowy remoteness of a far corner of Gilderoy Lovell's gorgeous caravan. Occasionally he used pleasantly to contemplate them. When he did so he was sometimes wont to say, 'Yes, my Dorelia, it's a faster sort of holding than theirs that holds me and you together. And it was your Poley, do you mind? who went and snapped the fastening to, that fine day when he'd been out a-walking with the police. Dórdi! I could laugh now when I think of it.'

R. O. M.



### A PORTUGUESE PATCHWORK.

It is mid-October, but perfect summer still—a season of skies absolutely cloudless, of scorching sunshine, of heat so intense that, high perched as the Condados is, standing ‘four square to all the winds that blow,’ I hesitate to leave the shelter of the house between the hours of 10 and 4; a season of gorgeous sunsets, pageants of scarlet and gold, ablaze beyond the calmly glittering Atlantic, and of the most exquisite violet twilights imaginable. Each evening I always watch by the deathbed of the dying day, as it passes away amid fire and flame, like an Indian widow on her funereal pyre—spending the hour that is such a curious union of calm peace and lurid grandeur on the broad terrace which clasps the south and west sides of the old *palazzo*. This terrace, with its thickets of roses, its oleanders, and its broken sun-dial, is a delectable lingering place, and I do not come away till the deep purple velvet that robes the queen of night is strewn thick with the largest and most brilliant stars I have ever seen. The air is full of pungent balm, distilled throughout the long hot day by heat and sunshine from the thousand aromatic things—myrtle and lavender, eucalyptus and rosemary, juniper and bay—that clothe all uncultivated spaces around me, and the only sounds that break the stillness are the murmur of ocean as its long-drawn swell breaks in languid ripples on the bar of the Mondego and the answering whisper that creeps through the pine-copse, black on the skyline against the imperial purple of the southern night.

Yes, though it is mid-October, summer is with us still, and the world and his wife who, when July poured her torrid heat upon the land, licking up all moisture as with a tongue of flame, and setting body and mind athirst for seaboard regions of comparative coolness, came to Figueira to bathe the breathless months away upon her yellow sands, and to lose their money in her gambling salons, are only now flocking home again—bag and baggage, in the most literal sense of the term. Let us spend a moment in the *Estação* of our little town—distant, *Graças a Deus*—two good miles away from the Condados, and watch the motley come-and-go. It is so typically Portuguese that if you were suddenly dropped down from

the clouds in its midst you could not possibly imagine yourself in any other land than this.

The dirty, squalid station is thronged with *passageiros*; following in their wake, the impecunious *indigenes*, the halt and the lame, the idiot and the blind, that for ever haunt its precincts in rags indescribable and the hope of turning an unearned penny, have assembled in fuller force than ever, and the shabby, cigarette-smoking officials shout and gesticulate more even than is their usual wont.

The 11.20, the principal morning train, is about to be sent on her way. Red-sashed countrymen are taking their places in her, off to buy or sell bulls at the weekly fair of Montemor, the little town half-an-hour distant, whose name, signifying the Hill of the Moors, is so eloquent of Portugal's historic past. Fisher-girls, in the black velvet-bound turban-shaped hats which keep green the memory of a costume that once was universal, are piling the van high with baskets of fish intended for the markets of Coimbra and Salamanca, under the indolent eye of the Guarda Fiscal, who stands by, trim in his neat uniform of grey and red-piped blue, and with the eternal cigarette alight under his jaunty moustache. But these you may see any day of the week. Not so the gorgeous army of 'Banhistos' and 'Banhistas' whose exodus is proceeding. Here comes a family party, the father in his black cloth manta with scarlet facings, silver clasps and little shoulder capes, the mother, if she be not in black, gay with all the aniline tints that are not of the rainbow. A monstrous hat is perched on the summit of her fantastically arranged pile of coarse and well-greased, jetty hair, her sallow cheeks are pasty with pearl powder and perspiration. The small fry that clamour shrilly in her wake are bedizened into the semblance of miniature fashion plates, with top-heavy hats and frilled and furbelowed garments of violent hue which, regarded doubtless as *le dernier cri* of elegance, certainly scream aloud at their association. Self-possessed to an irritating degree are these imps, and their bold, well-opened eyes, so curiously African of suggestion, will more easily stare you out of countenance than fall abashed beneath your gaze. Each of the travellers is attended by at least three friends who, if the dear departing were bound for immediate execution, could not take leave of them with greater ado. The ladies kiss effusively, first on one cheek, then on the other; the men embrace with wide-flung arms that revolve like the sails of a windmill; hats are solemnly waved, and handkerchiefs

frantically fluttered till the air is piebald with black and white flourishes; attitudes are struck, adieux are screamed (if one is to believe in the transmigration of souls, there can be no doubt that the Portuguese in a previous state of existence was a peacock), and tearless eyes are wiped. All the panoply of woe has been displayed, when discovery follows that it was only the first of three warning bells which rang. So the performance recommences, to continue till the second bell sounds and then—*da capo*.

These might be a party of female emigrants laden with all their worldly goods who stand meanwhile apart—barefooted, muffled in shapeless shawls and their brows bound with cloths, whose gaudy colours throw into strong relief the olive of rounded cheeks, and the jet of straying locks of hair. Were they less sturdy, less firmly planted on their finely-formed feet, less strong of limb, they would bend beneath the loads they carry, instead of walking erect with the gait of an empress and the supple grace of a young pinetree. Notice the girl in the kirtle of strong green woollen, upkilt to show a broad band of crimson petticoat, and half covered by a crimson apron patterned in white. A shawl of emerald green, gaily striped with pink and white, swathes the upper part of her body as a canary-coloured handkerchief does her head. In one hand is a battered portmanteau, in the other a carpet-bag, wherein purple roses and sulphur geraniums bloom resplendent from a background of magenta wool. Pendant from one arm is a huge bag of cotton patchwork, stuffed to its fullest capacity; poised on her head is a basket piled high with pots and pans. Her companion, a portly person in skirts of scarlet, sky-blue shawl and orange kerchief, is gravely statuesque under the weight of a wooden trunk, while a bundle of bedding is clipped tight under the left arm, and her free hand grasps the mouth of another bag, made apparently—probably indeed *de facto*—from the pattern book of a Manchester firm. I gaze at these poor women with compassion in my heart for those who are surely preparing to leave their native shores for some distant colony, till it suddenly dawns upon me that instead of being homeless wanderers they are the retainers of the senhors and senhoras, who are taking such touching farewell of their friends and acquaintance.

Quite a golden harvest is gleaned by the native who can spare one or two furnished rooms (unfurnished, I should call them, but that is by the way!), or a tiny flat during Figueira's busy season, and many are those who flock hither to minister to the

wants of more pecunious visitors. This *donna* who tramps by, straight as a lath under the head-borne burden of an iron stove, while she is hung thick as any travelling tinker with tins and baking sheets, is the servant of a lady who has paid her rents by making the prawn-patties, the puffs filled with *ovos molles*, and the delicious *paõ de l'or* or 'golden bread' (anglicé : sponge-cake)—for which she possesses time-honoured recipes ; and she who follows, with a valise riding triumphantly aloft, and the roll of blankets in whose one hand is counterpoised by a tower of bonnet boxes in the other, is the assistant of the beetle-browed person who keeps such watch and ward over her movements. While the *Senhora Modista* has passed her mornings in the surf of the Atlantic and her evenings in the Casino, her afternoons have been employed in retailing the latest 'Parisian' millinery to the rank and fashion of Figueira, or in twisting and twirling home-hoarded fragments of silk and satin into fashionable form.

Further up the platform is a group of Spaniards. You will have guessed the nationality of the women by the coquettish glance of lovely eyes that are darkly, languorously lustrous, by the beautiful curve of the most enchanting full red lips that ever lured man to his destruction, no less than by the simple elegance of the plainly made black dress, the *mantilha* so gracefully disposed over hair black and glossy as the raven's wing and the glowing carnation that confines its folds. These women are dancers from Seville, who, having displayed the trim ankle and arched instep of Andalusia nightly throughout the season at the Casino, are now homeward bound. So, too, is the company of bull-fighters close by. No mistaking the profession of these gentlemen of the short jackets and fringed sash-girdle, of the skin-tight breeches, broad-brimmed sombrero and tiny pigtails, of the low forehead and thick necks, which in themselves suffice to suggest their co-partners in the national pastime. These *toureiros* have turned their time to good account in their tour of the arenas, which are to be found in every Portuguese town, however small, and they will be able to live a life of golden ease throughout a winter whose cold is often more keenly felt than in lands where the thermometer falls habitually below zero.

If you have ever travelled in Portugal you cannot fail to have been struck (not, perhaps, in the Cosmopolitan Sud Express, but in the ordinary *Rapidos*, save the mark ! to say nothing of the *comboios mixtos*) by the ubiquity of the patchwork bag which seems to serve the purpose of portmanteau, dressing-case, and luncheon basket to

the Portuguese when his foot is abroad on his native heath. This is the receptacle in which he carries the small impedimenta of his perilous enterprise (he still, by the way, makes his will with due solemnity when on the eve of travel in foreign parts ; and we never fail to send our servants with anxious inquiry after the welfare of such of our excellent and illustrious friends who have returned in safety from a journey of two or three hours) ; and whether it be the samples of beans and maize he is taking to the fair at the nearest market town, the toothbrush and clean collar that equip him for a visit to the gay metropolis, the biscuits and ‘*Marmelata*’ that sustain him on the way, or the bundles of greasy native notes (beginning at a value of 10s.), and the English sovereigns so eagerly sought and carefully hoarded in a country that has no gold of her own, that are to be exchanged for scrip or bond, all rides comfortably in the patchwork bag. Potent, grave and reverend Senhors, pillars of State, dignitaries of the Church, legal luminaries, university professors, no less than the peasant on his way to market, and the private soldier on furlough—one and all are equipped with the national hold-all, which proves as capacious and variously prolific as the immortal bag from which the prudent Mrs. Swiss Family Robinson supplied the wants of her progeny on a desert island in the midst of the Pacific. Were I to come across the King himself *en voyage* I should expect him to seek his pocket-handkerchief in the depths of a many-coloured cotton sack pendant from his left arm, while the refreshment he would surely offer me would emerge from the same hiding-place.

And very much surprised should I be if he did not press an apple or its seasonable equivalent on me, for your true Portuguese, worthy descendant of the courteous East, will never embark on his own apology for a meal—be it of the simplest character and scantiest proportions—without begging his fellow-travellers to do him the extreme honour of partaking, and if acceptance of such hospitality is not always expected or even desired, the most gracious thing to do, in nine cases out of ten, is to help yourself to a grape or a ‘*bolacha*’ the while you call upon Heaven to shower blessings on your benefactor. Your own repast, *bien entendu*, must be similarly proffered to one and all of the occupants of your compartment. You may be sure no undue advantage will be taken of your invitation, but cordial relations will be established, and everything is now comfortable all round.

How gracefully and genuinely friendly—in the intervals of

sharpening the knife of murder, of loading the revolver of assassination, of preparing the bomb of wholesale slaughter—are these Portuguese! Many are the instances of extraordinary and most delicate kindness received that rise up in the cinematograph of memory. And the fact that they were showered upon that sternly disapproved product of hated Albion, the unprotected female, walking unabashed in public thoroughfares, made them all the more amazing. Can I, for instance, forget the smart and distinctly handsome Non-Com. who, in answer to my barely intelligible appeal for direction to the old Tower of Belem, which hangs with such ruggedly picturesque effect over the shining expanse of Tagus, insisted on devoting two precious hours of his afternoon's leave to squiring me to all the sights, and only parted from his adopted charge after presenting her with a railway ticket back to Lisbon, for which he absolutely refused repayment. Or the soldierly old gentleman of benign aspect, fellow-traveller from Madrid to Lisbon, who surreptitiously paid for the lunch I enjoyed so much at Alcantara, the frontier station, and whom only a determined man-hunt revealed and obliged to accept reimbursement? Or the kindly folk of Luzo, of whom I shall ever think with peculiar and quite affectionate gratitude, and how they bestowed courtesies innumerable, and, by way of special consolation, two exquisite bouquets on the solitary female who sat, stranded and forlorn, on the top of her box at their little roadside station in slowly waning expectation of the cavalier that never came? Many are the bright threads that unlooked-for kindness and courtesy have contributed to the web woven from the memories of half a lifetime's wandering—but nowhere have I found more spontaneous and charming consideration for the wayfarer than under the sunny skies of the Peninsula.

If, to quote the Portuguese saying, 'Sun and flies are the two things that are necessary to the success of a good bull fight' (*sol e moscas é o que é preciso para uma boa Tourada*) it is difficult to realise that such joys are, with the season, over, till St. John opens the ball again next year on June 24, the most popular feast of the Portuguese Calendar. Neither flies nor sun were lacking as I drove down to Búarcos one day last week, and Chica, our gallant little pony, whisked his tail incessantly, in vain endeavour to circumvent his tormentors. We went down lanes, deeply rutted by the slowly revolving wheels of heavy oxen-carts, and fringed with sprawling aloes which, languid in the heat of afternoon, resembled stranded



octopuses extending livid tentacles in search of prey. The wretched village to which we presently came looked doubly squalid under the rays which mercilessly revealed dirt and disorder indescribable, and drew sickening emanations from the heaps at cottage doors—heaps in which fish-heads and empty cockleshells were the most reputable elements. Squatting on the thresholds of the low, square hovels, so dazzling white, or gaily tinted with pink or buff, the female population of Buarcos pursued their occupations, here drawing a listless needle through some unspeakably tattered garment, or chasing small deer through the happy hunting ground of a neighbour's head, as it lies in a red cotton lap, there indulging in gossip and gesticulation as the wire-like, hooked knitting-needles dived in and out of a slowly, proceeding stocking, or gazing, impassive, and motionless as if carved out of stone, out from beneath black-hooded brows, over the broad expanse of ocean. For the Atlantic lies at our feet, its gently heaving bosom agleam with the sheen of faint blue satin, as it breaks in languid ripples on the amber beach. But if the sun, still high in the heavens this superb October day, betrays with scorching scorn each shameless secret of domestic filth and degrading squalor, it also lends additional radiance to the Turkey reds and rose pinks of kirtle, and the buff and yellows of kerchief, to the vivid blues and grass-greens of shawl and apron, and evokes strange gleams from the ornaments of pure gold that hang from ear or on bosom. The men who lounge by, idle in the intervals of a fisherman's life of spasmodic energy, are a complete foil to the brilliance of their wives and sweethearts, the customary Masaniello cap of scarlet-bound black or green, with point falling to the shoulder, and an occasional red sash as substitute for braces, being the only picturesque features of their dress. But very personable fellows, nevertheless, are these toilers of the sea—tall, well-knit of frame, bold of eye, and their natural swarthinness bronzed by constant exposure to wind and weather. Somewhat lowering is their expression till a smile casts sudden illumination over the mahogany cheek and scowling mouth. Then—oh, the magic of the Latin smile! Especially where, as here, the Latin wooed the Kelt in the days of a prehistoric past. It is as individual as the laugh that marks the Teuton, and what a miracle it works! Two of the ugliest men I have ever seen—my travelling companions in the Peninsula—(they are at the opposite ends of the social scale, and one is a king)—were instantaneously transformed into the most captivating of persons when a smile lit up their uncomely countenances. The charm



worked by the guffaw, so typically German, is not exactly the work of a well-meaning Fairy.

Just at the point where Buarcos merges into the breezy little seaport town of Figueira da Foz, a gentle eminence rising in the angle formed by their junction overlooks the sweep of the Atlantic. Its turquoise mirror is bounded on the south by the quaint old fortress of S. Caterina, guardian once, though now dismantled, of the broad, navigable Mondego; on the north by the bold slate cliffs of the Cape for which the river stood sponsor. To-day the promontory is but a purple shadow plunging into depths of sparkling peacock-blue. On the brow of the slopes which thus overlook both Buarcos and Figueira the *Praça de Touros* sits enthroned, its walls—honey-golden in the sun, richly umber in the shade—sharply defined against a sky of purest cobalt.

Everyone knows that the bull-ring—architecturally considered—is a survival of the arena of ancient Rome, and is built practically on the same lines as the Coliseum that saw the struggle of the gladiator and the martyrdom of saint and virgin. The bull-ring of Figueira differs only in size from more important specimens of its kind. It can accommodate 3000 spectators, on circular tiers of seats, each tier rising above and behind each other, and all commanding uninterrupted view of the scene of action. The price of the places varies in inverse proportion to their exposure to the sun, the shady seats costing 1000 reis (*i.e.* 4s.) each, while those that afford no shelter from the rays that beat down so pitilessly throughout the long afternoon of a Southern summer may be had for 300 or 400 reis. A special podium is the privilege of the local big-wigs, the band occupies a similar one, and the shady half of the highest tier is divided also into boxes, each containing six places. The lowest circle of seats is raised well above the arena, and is further protected from the possible attacks of an infuriated bull by an intervening couloir topped on the near side by a stout iron railing. Should the bull, as sometimes happens, succeed in jumping over the first barrier, he finds himself in this narrow, curving passage, unable to turn or to gain impetus for a fresh leap. Four great gates open into the arena, one is reserved for the *Cavalleiros*, who, in their superb dresses—many of them of great antiquity, some even heir-looms—and mounted on really fine horses (very different these from the doomed hacks of a Spanish Tourado) make a brave show as they ride round the ring, bowing their *cortesas*, and their steeds sidling along so as to continually face the spectators. By the

second portal the *Bandarilheiros*, or *capinhos*—a word derived from the scarlet capes with whose flourishes they seek to inflame the fury of the bull, aides-de-camp of the *tourreiro* proper—make their appearance, while the third and fourth, the one for his entrance and the other for his exit, are sacred to the hero of the day.

Ten bulls are required for one *Tourado*, and they take it in turn to contribute their share of the entertainment. Brought in some days previously from the country in a practically wild condition, they pass the interval in solitary confinement, each in its own small den at the back of the arena. This cell is furnished with a portcullis door which gives access to the narrowest of narrow passages. When the great day comes the portcullis is drawn up—no man dare venture in this circumscribed space to approach the savage creature—and the bull, maddened by imprisonment after the free life of the *Campanha*, dashes along the only outlet open to him, and emerges in the ring.

Bull fights have been too often described for me to hope to find anything fresh to say on the subject. I will limit myself to pointing out the essential difference between the Portuguese *Corrida* and that of Spain. Here horses take little but a ceremonial and decorative part in the performance, and seldom, if ever, are allowed to suffer injury. If the *Cavalleiro* loses the fine three-cornered hat decked out with plumes that covers his powdered hair (absence of pigtail, by the way, distinguishes the Portuguese bull-fighter from his Spanish *confrère*), or if he allows his foot to slip from the stirrup, the *vox populi* demands that he alight from his horse and continue the combat on foot, as a penalty for losing the calm demeanour that should mark the perfect cavalier. The horns of the bull being tipped, his powers of inflicting mortal injury are greatly discounted, and he himself is spared to become an old campaigner. Having fought the good fight, he is decoyed off the scene by cows trained for the purpose. From these he is easily again separated by a series of quickly-succeeding portcullises, and in this manner he is enticed out into a green paddock and left to calm down at his leisure.

Many bulls are celebrated for their belligerent talent, and travel about from town to town in order to display it. An old stager may easily be known by the tranquil, almost *blasé*, air with which he trots into the ring—the frenzied excitement of the *débutant* altogether absent—while the bored expression on his face seems to say, 'What utter fools these people are! Why cannot I be left to the bovine

pursuits which are all I ask of life? Well, I suppose I've got to humour them.' But, when once he warms to his work, judgment, agility and courage in full measure are needed before exhaustion leaves him at the mercy of his adversary.

Even after the duel that has resulted in the victory of the *toureiro* there is often plenty of fight left in the bull, as the *moços de forcada*—(the inferior attendants of the ring, so called from the forked goads they carry)—find, who sometimes, a short breathing space having been accorded the wearied animal, obtain permission to essay their skill on him.

Their object is to leap—facing the bull—on to his head between the horns, and success is generally recognised by a shower of copper coins flung into the arena. Some *moços* there are that accomplish this feat with a backward leap, and frenzied is the acclamation that greets one of these, as he alights on the brow of the snorting, pawing creature; but it is said that such temerity is generally born of the 'Dutch courage' otherwise so alien to the character of the Portuguese.

Though the absence of extreme cruelty and the more equal footing of man and beast differentiate the bull-fight of Portugal from that of her sister country, there is nevertheless a strong element of danger to the *Toureiro* and of suffering to the bull. The latter receives many a painful prod, if he appears reluctant to rise to the occasion, and the wounds thus caused are subsequently treated with salt and vinegar in a manner that causes exquisite pain. The bull, if not exactly 'butchered,' is undoubtedly 'tortured to make a public holiday,' and the Portuguese cannot be altogether absolved from the charge of inhumanity. But who is the average man, whatever his nationality and whatever form his passion for chase and combat may take, that shall throw the first stone at him?

The sun was sinking fast as I returned to the Condados. Chica had gone to her rest, and I had been permitted the unwonted luxury of a solitary walk. The octopus aloes were throwing long, fantastic shadows athwart the road, and the contours of the hard-baked banks that border it glowed like red-hot copper in the level beams. The air had that light, yet dewy quality, that union of freshness and velvety balm, suggestive of champagne allied to green curaçoa, which, except in Corsica, I have never found elsewhere but in Portugal. As I hastened homeward—night falls quickly in these latitudes—I met the Padre. He is great at sports, ruddy and

stalwart, and tall, as a mighty huntsman before the Lord ought to be. The spoils of his gun are frequently laid at Donna Emilia's shrine—rabbits, wild ducks and hares making their bow at odd moments, with his Reverence's *complimentas*. He does not present them himself—that would be improper, seeing that my aunt is a widow and only eighty-three. I once ventured on a joke—a very poor, timid, little half-fledged joke—on the attentions thus paid her by her clerical admirer, considering them, as I said, almost as pointed as the cauliflowers cast at Mrs. Nickleby's feet. The silver-haired old lady drew herself up with a gesture of inimitable dignity, and the soft pink in her pretty cheeks positively deepened as: 'You know, my dear,' she said, with all the severity of which a shocked dove might be supposed to be capable, 'you know how *much* I enjoy a little joke; but there *are* limits, and you must *never* say such a thing again, even in fun. Only *think*, if any one who understands English were to hear you! You don't know *what* construction might not be put upon your words!' After which warning it certainly *was* indiscreet on my part to stop the *Senhor Vicario* when he and I met on the King's highway. Donna Emilia and I had feasted lately off a couple of partridges which, having fallen to his gun, had made their way to our table, and the memory of the savoury meats rising up before me as our benefactor strode round the corner, I stopped to return thanks for our good dinner. The champagne and the green Chartreuse must certainly have gone to my head! How was it else possible that I could so forget myself? I ought to have remembered that I was alone, in a land against whose social conventions I was already sinning sufficiently by indulgence in unescorted promenade, and that it was, in the highest degree, unseemly for unchaperoned woman to extend the hand of friendship to a man be he ten times the Padre and the Keeper of our Consciences. But if I did not remember it, he did. I could not conceive what ailed the decent man, and was somewhat affronted by his evident desire to cut short the pretty things I was painfully constructing out of my very elementary Portuguese. 'It is clear,' I thought, 'that fat and forty, with her spectacles and her grey hair hath no charms to soothe this savage breast.' Not till my return to the Condados did I realise that I had hopelessly compromised myself. Had I even been accompanied by one of my own sex, my behaviour would have been improper; but alone, unattended, in a country whose jealousy of its women is one of the most marked characteristics inherited from Moorish ancestry, to stop a man in

public places, to endeavour to lure him into conversation and meet and part with a handshake, was to lose the small remnant of reputation my extraordinary passion for independence had left me. Unluckily, the scene, so distressing to all who know how to value feminine modesty and decorum, was enacted immediately under the windows of the *Cuartel*, or barracks, and, as soldier sweethearts are at as high a premium in the Peninsula as elsewhere, the shocking news would probably reach the ears of all the mistresses of Figueira by nightfall. Mercifully, *j'ai le bon dos*, and Donna Emilia finds comfort in the knowledge that her friends and neighbours will only tap their foreheads significantly, and remark that, after all '*todes os Ingleses saõ pouco mais ou menos doidos* !' (all the English are more or less mad).

CONSTANCE LEIGH CLARE.

*A FORGOTTEN TRAGEDY.*

THE story of Khartoum is fresh in the world's memory, and the name of its martyr still evokes feelings of pity and indignation in the minds of men who have lived to see Slatin liberated and Gordon avenged. But few, if any, have ever heard the history of one whose captivity was probably harder, and certainly more hopeless, than Slatin's, and whose death was incomparably more bitter than the death of Gordon, falling, as he did, in the midst of battle, and sustained by the belief that he had done his duty.

This hitherto untold story is that of an obscure struggle which broke out in a remote corner of Great Britain's dominions, and which, coming as it did at a time when the world's stage was filled with larger wars, and more tremendous issues, might well have appeared even less important than it actually was. England has long forgotten it; but those who were then responsible for the Empire's safety were not slow to realise the dangers of the situation, although the whole episode speedily sank into the oblivion reserved for such fruitless disturbances. It was a war unnecessary and singularly ill-judged; it was mismanaged from start to finish, and moreover it was entirely unsuccessful in accomplishing the ends for which it was undertaken. It occupies no page in history: its whole story may be written ignominiously in the one word Failure; yet the curious explorer among the tangled byways of the past finds a deeply pathetic interest in the melancholy completeness of this insignificant tragedy, and is fired with an almost passionate sympathy for its unheroic hero.

In the year 1796 Great Britain took possession of the Dutch settlements in Ceylon, which then consisted only of the coast line, measuring some seven hundred miles in circumference; the interior being retained by the King of Kandy, who ruled over the native inhabitants. These latter were a suspicious and unfriendly race, and displayed a most reprehensible, if natural, desire to keep their country to themselves. With this they combined an unreasonable reluctance to accept certain terms dictated by the British governor, Mr. Frederick North, regarding the commercial relations between their merchants and the colonists, the making of roads through their territory, and the regulation of their intercourse with other

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foreign nations. During several years the friction between the Kandians and their unwelcome neighbours—neighbours, too, who promised to be permanent—grew more intense, promoted as it was by Pelime Talauve, the First Adigar or Prime Minister at the Kandian Court. This worthy devoted all his ingenuity, which seems to have been of no mean order, to bringing the quarrel to a head, and he succeeded so well that in 1802 Mr. North, unable longer to endure it, ordered such troops as happened to be at his disposal to march on Kandy and to enforce his treaty at the sword's point. They were to move in two converging columns, one starting from Trincomalee under Colonel Barbutt, the other from Colombo under General McDowall. They were to join forces, take possession of the capital, reduce the inhabitants to submission, and make their own terms with the crestfallen First Adigar. The programme was magnificent in its simplicity; the enemy were known to be beneath contempt as a fighting force; and the certain approach of a desperate contest between British and Mahrattas in India, which might have caused North to hold his hand, seems not to have entered into his calculations. He probably felt sure that this necessary chastisement of a hostile native population would be over long before his troops could possibly be required elsewhere. He was doubtless in the same mood as another generation of his countrymen when they dispatched an expedition to South Africa for the due punishment of a tribe of unruly farmers.

So, in the end of January, 1803, a small army consisting of rather more than three thousand men all told, of whom about a third were Europeans, and the rest Malays and Sepoys, set forth boldly into the little known country, consisting chiefly of trackless jungle, which then constituted the interior of the island. At first all went well. The roads were few and of the roughest description, the transport was defective, and the march inconceivably toilsome; but the enemy invariably ran away at the approach of the column, the several strong forts that barred its advance were carried without even a show of resistance, and the junction of the two forces was effected with almost miraculous precision within a few miles of their common goal, and without the loss of a single man. Is it to be wondered at that both North and his General should have been filled with a pardonable elation, and that when the army entered Kandy on February 21 and occupied it without resistance, they should have congratulated themselves and each other on their task being well-nigh done?



It must doubtless have been somewhat damping to the conquerors to make their triumphal entry into a city of the dead. The Kandy of the old kings was a long straggling collection of mean houses and branching lanes, crowned with its palace, its temple, and its tombs. But its streets were silent and entirely deserted; many of its buildings were in flames; its treasures had vanished, and its magazines had been blown up. Nothing daunted, the victorious General established his troops in the abandoned capital, and a few days later brought in Mootoo Sawmy, the lawful heir to the throne, whose cause had been espoused by the British, and installed him in the empty palace. It is difficult to imagine a more depressing ceremony than the reinstatement of an exiled king on the throne of his ancestors without the vestige of an audience either to applaud or to execrate; but McDowall and Barbutt went through the business in a way which does them credit, and having set up their monarch they proceeded to submit their treaty for his acceptance. The new sovereign, however, displayed more spirit than gratitude, and in spite of the humiliating reluctance of his subjects not only to support him, but even to put in an appearance, he firmly declined to assent to the cession of certain territory as the price of British assistance. Such unexpected behaviour necessitated a reference to headquarters, and it was only after some delay that a satisfactory settlement was arrived at. Meanwhile the army continued to occupy Kandy, without any very tangible result. An element of uncertainty had crept into the situation, which only a short time before had appeared so satisfactory. No undertaking could have been carried out more successfully or more exactly as it had been planned; yet nothing whatever seemed to have been accomplished; and it was extremely difficult to know what to do next.

By this time it had been ascertained that the First Adigar and the deposed King had fled to a palace in the hills, two days' march from the capital. From this stronghold they dispatched bands of their adherents, who harried the British outposts and murdered all stragglers. To make matters worse, jungle fever attacked the garrison and speedily reduced it to little more than half of its original strength. The First Adigar next proceeded to beguile McDowall into sending two detachments, numbering eight hundred men in all, to surprise the King's retreat at Hangaramkatty, promising to deliver his master into their hands. It is needless to say that when, after an arduous march under a constant fire, the troops

reached their goal, it was only to find that the King had fled, and they were obliged to return to Kandy empty-handed, with the loss of twenty men wounded and nineteen coolies killed.

This was the position of affairs, with the added complication of the near approach of the rainy season, when a dispatch reached North from India to the effect that General Arthur Wellesley was marching on Poona, and that no more men could be spared for Ceylon. Here was a predicament indeed ; and it is easy to understand that the unfortunate Governor felt extremely disconcerted and that his judgment at such a crisis may have become more than usually obscured.

On March 25, the day after receiving the news, he sent orders to McDowall to the effect that the war must be ended at once, though a garrison was to be left in Kandy till some convention could be agreed upon. It can only be supposed that he did not at the time realise the full significance of these instructions. McDowall carried them out by arranging yet another treaty with the First Adigar's representative, who came to Kandy, and agreed with the utmost complaisance to the British demands. This done, the General marched back to Colombo with the bulk of the force, leaving behind him a garrison of three hundred Europeans and seven hundred natives, mostly Malays, under Colonel Barbutt, to hold the city till the First Adigar should come in person to ratify the treaty. He arrived punctually at the appointed rendezvous to meet Governor North, and confirmed the promises of his deputy, only stipulating that these should not be carried into effect until the King of Kandy had been delivered into the hands of the British. All seemed to be going smoothly, and peace to be in sight at last.

By request of the First Adigar, McDowall returned temporarily to Kandy, to take charge, and see to the execution of the treaty in place of Colonel Barbutt, who had fallen ill. He arrived on May 23, to find a truly lamentable state of affairs. Since his departure, barely two months before, the unfortunate garrison had been ravaged by fever. Many were already dead, and nearly all the Europeans were in hospital. His brigade-major had succumbed on the journey ; he himself and his only remaining staff-officer were stricken down within a few days of their arrival. Still, the end was at hand—a little more endurance and all the conditions would be fulfilled ; the treaty put into execution, peace established on a satisfactory basis, and the garrison withdrawn as soon as they were fit for the march. The days passed on and nothing happened.

It was slowly borne in upon McDowall that he and his hapless chief had been duped again, and that the good faith of the enemy's leader was even as the heroism of his soldiers. At last came an ominous message from the First Adigar, to the effect that he could not attend the British General without the King's permission : and McDowall's worst fears were confirmed. What was to be done next ? That was a hard question, and he was in no condition to supply the answer. Prostrate with fever, so sick, indeed, as to be scarcely able to travel, he left Kandy on June 11, and, almost by a miracle, reached Colombo alive on the 19th. The unhappy garrison remained at their post.

It is at this point that the curtain rises upon the final tragedy which was to be played out to the bitter end in the enemy's stronghold among the hills. North and McDowall vanish from the scene. For the rest of the miserable drama one chief actor, the new commandant of the deserted garrison, holds the stage alone.

With McDowall gone, and Colonel Barbutt sick unto death, the command devolved upon a certain Major Davie. It would be interesting to know something of this officer's past history and career, but it seems probable that he was designed by Nature for the unexalted routine of regimental duty. It befell him to be seized by Fate and tried by her awful standards of danger and responsibility, amid peculiarly distressing circumstances of loneliness, confusion and terror.

By the third week in June the British soldiers were dying at the rate of six a day, the Malays were beginning to desert, and the cowardly Kandian warriors were creeping forward at last, drawing nearer and nearer, and entrenching themselves as they came. Reinforcements were eagerly expected by the anxious garrison, but they waited for them in vain. The relief expedition did not even leave Colombo till three days after the long delayed blow had fallen. For the First Adigar deemed that the moment for striking had arrived, now that his enemy lay helpless in the hollow of his hand. But even now, true to his instincts, he would take no unnecessary risks. He tried to lure Davie from his stronghold by the same stratagem which had before succeeded with McDowall, and proposed that he should make a second expedition to Hangaramkatty, declaring that he himself had quarrelled with his master, and that only in this way could negotiations be resumed. But Davie declined to be entrapped into leaving the city in search of that mythical individual, the First Adigar's master.

If the truth were known he had no troops fit for the undertaking, even had he desired to embark upon it.

His wiles having proved unsuccessful, Pelime Talauve was reduced to making a direct attack, uncongenial as this expedient doubtless was to his crooked mind. He had previously succeeded in re-taking the posts on the road to Colombo, the garrisons of which had mostly succumbed to fever, so that all communication with the coast was finally cut off, and on the morning of June 23 he sent a message to Davie, warning him that, in spite of all his personal efforts to prevent it, an attack would shortly be made on the British position. Davie made the best preparations for defence possible with the means at his command, and awaited events. By his orders, the remnant of the garrison were all concentrated in the Palace, and the Kandians began the onslaught at four o'clock, by attacking a post on a hill in the rear of the building. Only a very small guard could be spared for this position—ten native soldiers with a light field gun—and even Kandian valour found their resistance easy to overcome. An hour later a strong body of Malays, in the service of the King of Kandy, stormed the palace by the eastern barrier, where Davie had posted his second gun. This was a very different matter, for the enemy found themselves opposed by a lieutenant of the 19th Foot, with a handful of his regiment. Had they been Kandians and not Malays, it would have been almost surprising to find that they did not turn and fly at the mere sight of the redcoats; but they probably knew only too well how very few of them were left to fight. At any rate, they came on, and closed in a hand-to-hand struggle. The Malay leader stabbed the British officer to death; and was in his turn hewn down by the adjutant of the 19th. While the battle was still raging, the alarm bell sounded from within the palace, and a sudden discharge of grape annihilated twenty-four of the attacking party, who thereupon withdrew, keeping up a steady fire from their light native field-pieces. The British guns replied, and throughout the night and until far into the next day the artillery duel was prolonged. There seems to have been no more fighting at close quarters; but at 2 P.M. on the 24th there were signs of a general advance of the enemy in great force, and such European officers as still survived came to beg Davie to capitulate. It must be remembered that practically all of them were invalids, and that the outlook was gloomy enough. By this time the garrison was reduced literally to twenty British soldiers, termed by courtesy fit for service,

though half of them were still recovering from fever ; of the remainder of the three hundred whom McDowall had left behind him when he first went down to Colombo, one hundred and twenty were in hospital and the rest were dead. Besides these there were the Malay regiments, whose fidelity could not be relied on, and the East India Company's Artillery. The officers themselves were utterly exhausted by sickness and fatigue ; it was impossible to hold out much longer, and surrender might give them some remote hope of escape. Yet Davie hesitated. Was he considering the possibility of another alternative, weighing the chances of success—desperate chances no doubt—that a sudden counter-attack might have to offer him ? North, commenting on the fall of Kandy in one of his dispatches, wrote later (with somewhat insufficient knowledge), 'I cannot understand why Davie laid down his arms. *Two hundred Europeans and forty Malays* could cut their way through any number of Kandians.' Davie had but twenty Europeans, and the Malays he was unable to trust. Perhaps an offensive movement would have been too daring ; at any rate, he did not make it. He yielded to the representations of his staff, signified his willingness to surrender, and was escorted by the loyal Malay officers into the presence of the First Adigar. The interview, as far as it went, was most satisfactory. That amazing potentate was as ready with smiles and promises to his enemies now that they were defeated, as he had been when they were conquerors dictating terms to him from his master's capital. It appeared that there was nothing that he was not ready to do for them. The British troops—such of them as were fit to march—were given a safe-conduct to Trincomalee ; Mootoo Sawmy was to accompany them, while the sick left behind in Kandy were to be fed and tended till they could be moved. The pathetic farce was carried out with the utmost solemnity. The convention was written and signed, and a passport was given to Davie in the King's name. In the King's name ! What a world of grim humour must have sounded in that magnificent familiar phrase to the ears of Davie and his officers ! And still the reinforcements did not come.

At 5 P.M. on June 24 the garrison marched out with the honours of war. There were fourteen British officers, twenty British soldiers, about a hundred Lascars, and two hundred and fifty Malays. They did not, perhaps, make a brave show as an army, but at least Kandy was behind them, and they had a safe-conduct to Trincomalee. They were shortly to learn the exact worth of

the First Adigar's safe-conduct. When they had marched a mile and a half from the town they found their road barred by the river Maha-villa-gunga. There was neither ford nor bridge; and, as dusk was already falling, Davie determined to postpone any attempt at crossing till daybreak, and called a halt for the night. Torrents of tropical rain were falling, and in deep discomfort and depression the forlorn little band encamped on the bank, waiting for the dawn. As soon as it was light they were astir, and set about making rafts out of such materials as could be found. The morning doubtless revived hope and confidence. They had been unmolested during the night; and once across the river they saw a reasonable chance of making good their escape. Perhaps even Davie began to think that his nightmare was coming to an end at last.

There can be little doubt that, in his own way, the First Adigar must have been a great artist. Condemned as he was to live and die in the mountains of a small island, ruling and intriguing in the midst of an obscure race, his talents have failed to obtain the recognition they deserved, and would have received, had they been exercised in a wider field. His skill as a statesman and diplomatist has already been described; his success as a general was somewhat impaired by the mortifying tendency of his army to turn their backs upon the adversary at the critical moment, but the planning of his final stroke on the banks of the Maha-villa-gunga was worthy of a more decisive occasion and a less exhausted foe.

Just as the hastily improvised rafts were nearing completion a company of armed Kandians appeared on the river bank, evidently with hostile intentions. Their chief informed the British commander that the King of Kandy was angry at the departure of the garrison, but that he was ready to provide boats for the passage of the troops on condition that Mootoo Sawmy, the late occupant of his throne, should be given up to him. Davie, after reminding them of the terms upon which he had surrendered, refused their demand, and the chiefs retired. By this time every man in the ranks must have known that, in spite of their safe-conduct, they were not intended to cross the river alive. They worked on, with feverish energy, till, two hours later, a second deputation of chiefs arrived, with the same ultimatum, couched in slightly different language. They invited Mootoo Sawmy to accompany them back to Kandy, and place himself in the hands of the King, who wished to protect him. Davie, though growing



desperate, resisted the second embassy, and declined to deliver up the unfortunate Pretender to the tender mercies of his rival. Again the messengers retreated ; but this time not for long. They returned almost immediately, with a final declaration from their master. If Mootoo Sawmy were not yielded up to them the whole force would straightway be sent to seize him, and to prevent the British troops from crossing the river.

Davie was brought face to face with the supreme decision, driven into a corner by his implacable destiny, held at bay by the responsibility which he had neither desired nor deserved. There was no escape, no possibility of compromise : the alternatives of heroism and infamy were suddenly presented to him ; then and there must the terrible choice be made. He was called upon to give up his trust, to buy the lives of himself and his followers at the price of that of the wretched puppet whom they had been sent to protect. The enemy were known to be despicable cowards, who had again and again fled in crowds at the onslaught of a few brave and disciplined soldiers ; their most solemn oaths were no more to be trusted than the idle breath of the wind. There was so little to lose ; so much, it might be, to be gained by a determined stand ; yet even in this moment of desperate possibilities Davie failed to play the man. The great moment passed, the great game was over.

After a brief consultation with his officers, he summoned Mootoo Sawmy and informed him that he no longer had any power to detain him, and that the King had promised to treat him kindly. The victim was probably hardly able to understand this statement at first ; but, when the truth dawned upon him, and he realised that he was being thrown to the wolves by those who had brought him out of obscurity to make him their tool, he overwhelmed the Major with prayers and reproaches. Perhaps, among the many torturing visions that were to haunt Davie through the years to come, this may have been the bitterest of all.

The price was paid, and the chiefs led away their prisoner to Kandy, and to death. Meanwhile Davie and his officers, untaught still by previous experiences, had yet to learn for what a vain and empty advantage they had sold their honour. For the hundredth time they had been deceived and hoodwinked ; they had staked their gold against counters ; and they had not even won. The hours wore on, and a few Kandians joined the impatient troops, and made a pretence of helping them with their rafts ; but there



was no sign of the promised boats. Eventually the British succeeded in passing a rope across to the opposite shore, but it was immediately cut by the Kandians. Then the Malays began to desert, and when night fell, and the little company of white men found themselves quite alone, they knew that the last scene must be very near at hand. At 11 P.M. a mob of the enemy approached and summoned them to lay down their arms on pain of being instantly surrounded and killed. Incredible as it seems, they obeyed, and allowed themselves to be marched back to Kandy. But few of them were destined even to get so far. While they were still at some distance from the town they were stopped, and after the remaining Malays had received and accepted the opportunity of deserting to the enemy, the Europeans were led out two by two, and their brains were dashed out with the butt end of muskets. Davie and one other officer alone were saved, and taken back to Kandy; a third officer got away, but was captured, and soon died. Within the capital there was a systematic massacre of all the sick Europeans—probably about one hundred and ninety all told. Of the whole garrison one thousand strong but one man escaped, Corporal Barnsley of the 19th, who, though fearfully wounded and left for dead, contrived to crawl through the jungle till he reached a British outpost, and returned to Colombo to tell the tale of what had happened in the hills.

The news of the disaster impelled North to send urgent appeals for help to Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, which were grudgingly responded to, in view of the danger which would threaten India if Ceylon, in its present defenceless condition, should be attacked by France. Further reinforcements were obtained by extensive purchase of African slaves, who were formed into a corps on the model of those which had been found to be successful in the West Indies.

With these heterogeneous forces North was enabled, during the next two years, to repel the incursions of the Kandians, and to keep up a war of perpetual small raids into their territory, which was as ineffectual in opening up any prospect of a real and lasting peace, as it was degrading and demoralising to the troops under his command. He knew better than to risk a second attempt on Kandy, where the scapegoat of his failures was left to his long expiation.

No human being will ever know the full details of that protracted captivity; but the character of his jailors, the true

bully's blend of cowardice and cruelty, leaves little room for doubt that the school in which Davie at last learnt fortitude was no easy one. It is certain that his companion in misfortune did not long survive the final surrender, so that to his physical miseries were added the horrors of an utter loneliness, and the burden of scorching memories and unending remorse. Surely for the purification of human weakness no God of awful justice could have devised a sterner hell.

For two years he suffered, and no voice came through the darkness to tell him that his friends still thought of him and hoped to save him. Then North was recalled, and General Thomas Maitland, who succeeded him, lost no time in establishing communication with the unhappy prisoner, by means of secret agencies, in the hope of contriving his escape. He judged it still impossible to lead an expedition against Kandy; but he spared neither money nor pains in his attempts at rescue. It is hardly possible to imagine Davie's feelings when Maitland's message reached him; the first ray of hope striking into the despair of his living death must have been almost more than he could bear. Was he to be saved after all—to be given a chance of wiping out the past—to be taken back out of this night of horrors to the light of day and the faces of friends? His answer to Maitland has come down to us, more eloquent than many words:

I, Davie, am the only prisoner left; the rest are all dead, murdered or starved. I am without meat or clothes. Do not tell my friends I am alive—I expect not to survive many days.

Yet he lived on for seven more years, with the added pang of an ever-dwindling hope. The rest of the letter was taken up with advice as to the conduct of a secret expedition to Kandy, and a plan for his escape, but closes with the words 'I am told that I am to be murdered when my countrymen come to Kandy.'

All Maitland's attempts failed, and the darkness fell thicker than ever over the deserted prisoner. His relations at home were mercifully allowed to believe him dead; and there is a pathetic record of an application made by his mother for the payment of his allowance, on the plea of her extreme poverty. She had six daughters, three of whom were still unmarried, and their whole source of income was her son's small estate in Edinburgh, which they feared would be seized by their threatening creditors.

At last, in 1812, the end came. Maitland had been succeeded by General Wilson, and to him were delivered Davie's last letters, which are still preserved among the pompous official documents—faded scraps of native paper, covered with faint characters traced in pencil, too evidently by a dying hand: sole record of those desolate years of human anguish, bitterness and despair. They are dated August 1811, ten miles S.E. of Kandy:

General Wilson, oh! be expeditious in saving me. Is there any question that my wishes are to be released without delay? I have no means to propose than those formerly mentioned. I have wrote several times during the last ten months, and have got three small slips of paper without signature. Messenger is of no use being in (*sic*) daily sick unto death, without many clothes or food. Please send me a little laudanum or opium to alleviate my pains; expect to die daily; could be carried by dooly by way of Gambo or Ganda [here follow illegible scraps about mohurs and rupees] if you no intention (*sic*) of speedily doing something, send me a pair of pistols to terminate my painful existence. Twelve months unable to rise from my mat (illegible) a penknife, a little rum, gin or brandy, or laudanum . . . stopping at Kalug . . . (illegible) and when night falls sending a party with a dooly might get out of the country (illegible) distance without a shot being fired, and as my anguish (illegible).

(Signed) DAVIE.

The second scrap measures about four and a half by two inches:

My anguish of body is insupportable, and I see but imperfectly. My dear friend, no paper—my complaints are (illegible).

Soon after these letters reached Colombo Maitland's agent reported that Davie had at last died of dysentery, and had been buried in the jungle. For nine years he had wasted in captivity, paying day by day the extreme penalty, even unto the uttermost farthing, of his own weakness, as well as of the folly and incompetence of his superiors. During the whole of that time British troops were stationed within a few days' march of him. Is it possible to fathom the depths of bitterness distilled in agony of spirit, from unnumbered disappointments, from endless months of waiting for the help which he could not bring himself to believe would never come—the bitterness which is summed up in one sentence of his last letter: 'Is there any question that my wishes are to be released without delay?'

Was Maitland right when he forbore to send an expedition at all costs and at any hazard, to end the martyrdom of the prisoner, if not by release, at any rate by death? History shows that he was: that he did his duty, and served his country in her hour of

need by refusing to spare a man for attacking Kandy while the fate of India still hung in the balance. In 1806 he was called upon for assistance in the supreme crisis of the mutiny at Vellore, and, thanks to his stern self-restraint, he was able to respond to the appeal. So was the atonement completed; but the mills of God grind slowly, and it was not till nearly six years later that Davie died.

BALKIS.

*THE OSBORNES.*<sup>1</sup>

BY E. F. BENSON.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE morning delicacy to which Lady Austell was so subject was due to the fact that when staying in other people's houses she found she saw enough of her hosts and fellow-guests if she denied herself the pleasure of their company at breakfast. In all other respects, she was stronger than most horses, and could go through programmes which would have prostrated all but the most robust without any feeling of unpleasant fatigue, provided only that the programmes interested or amused her or in any way furthered her plans. But she really became tired the moment she was bored, and since sitting at breakfast with ten or twelve cheerful people, with the crude morning sunlight perhaps pouring in at a window directly opposite her, bored her very much, she chose the wiser plan of not joining in those public festivities. But with her excellent tact she knew that at a house like Mrs. Osborne's everybody was expected to come down, to be in admirable spirits and to eat a great deal of solid food, and so she explained to Mrs. Osborne that she never ate any breakfast. Hence it was that about half-past nine next morning her maid carried upstairs a tray groaning with coffee, hot milk, toast, just one poached egg, and a delicious plate of fruit. Mrs. Osborne had given her a very pleasant sitting-room next her bedroom, furnished with Messrs. Linkwater's No. 1 white boudoir suite, for, like half the house, it had been practically unfurnished; and Austell, who had ascertained those comfortable facts when he bade his mother good-night the evening before, caused his own particular groaning tray to be brought here also, and paddled in to join her in carpet slippers and a dressing-gown.

'I call this a devilish comfortable house nowadays,' he observed, 'which is far more than could be said for it in our time. What a pity the Osbornes and we can't run it together. They would pay the bills, and we could give tone. I wish it was possible to be com-

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fortable, though poor. But it isn't. Everything comfortable costs so much. Now, darling mother, let loose, and tell me what you think of it all. Really your—your absence of breakfast looks quite delicious. They have given me chops and beef and things. May I have a piece of your melon ?'

Jim and his mother were rather fond of each other, but they seldom met without having a quarrel, for while both were agreed in the general plan of grabbing at whatever of this world's goods could be appropriated, each despised and, in private, exposed the methods of the other. He, so his mother was afraid, was one of the very few people who was not afraid of her, and she often wished he was. He had lit a cigarette after his bath, and was standing in front of the fireplace, on the thick, white sheepskin rug, smoking the end of it.

'Dear Jim,' she said, 'do you think you had better smoke in here ? Mrs. Osborne may not like it.'

'Oh, she will think it is you,' said Jim calmly, 'and so won't dare to say anything. She fears you : I can't think why. Now do tell me how it all strikes you. Can you bear it for three days ? I can easily : I could bear it for months and years. It is so comfortable. Now what did you and Mrs. Osborne talk about at dinner ? Mrs. O. and I talked about the Royal Family. Sir Thomas seems a nice man, doesn't he ?'

Lady Austell gave him a very generous share of her half-melon ; it looked rather like a bribe. She was going to indulge in what Jim called humbug, and hoped he would let it pass.

'I think, dear, as I said to Dora the other day,' she remarked, 'that we are far too apt to judge by the surface. We do not take enough account of the real and sterling virtues—honesty, kindness, hospitality—'

Austell cracked his egg.

'I did not take enough account of the effect of hospitality last night,' he remarked, 'because I ate too much supper, and felt uncommonly queer when I woke this morning—'

'You always were rather greedy, my darling,' said Lady Austell softly, scoring one.

'I know. I suppose I inherited it from my deli—I mean, cerebral-hæmorrhage grandfather. But I don't drink.'

This brought them about level. Jim proceeded with a smart and telling stroke.

'I refer my—my failures to my grandfather,' he said, 'so what-

ever you say about our hosts, dear mother, I shall consider that you are only speaking of their previous generations. Their hospitality is unbounded, their kindness prodigious, but I asked you how long you could stand it? Or perhaps the—the polish, the culture, the breeding of our hosts really does seem to you beyond question. Did you see the stuffed crocodile-lizard in the hall? I will give you one for your birthday.'

'I think you are odiously ungrateful, Jim,' she said. 'I have got them to take Grote for seven years at a really unheard-of price, and all I get in return is this.'

Jim opened his pale weak eyes very wide.

'What have I done?' he said. 'I have only agreed with you about their kindness, and asked your opinion about their breeding.'

'You are sarcastic and backbiting,' said his mother.

'Only as long as you talk such dreadful nonsense, darling mother,' he said. 'You don't indulge in rhapsodies about the honesty of your housemaid. Honesty in a housemaid is a far finer quality than in a millionaire, because millionaires are not tempted to be dishonest, whereas poor people like housemaids or you and me are. Really I only wanted to have a pleasant little chat about the Osbornes, only you will make it serious, and insincere. Let's be natural. I'll begin.'

He took one of his mother's crisp hot rolls, and buttered it heavily.

'I find Mr. and Mrs. O. quite delightful,' he said, 'and should have told you so long ago if you had only been frank. I do really. There isn't one particle of humbug about them, and they have the perfect ease and naturalness of good breeding.'

Lady Austell tossed her head.

'That word again,' she said. 'You seem to judge everybody by the standard of a certain superficial veneer, which you call breeding.'

'I know. One can't help it. I grant you that lots of well-bred people are rude and greedy, but there is a certain way of being rude and greedy which is all right. I'm greedy, so was the Cerebral grandpapa, only he was a gentleman and so am I. I'm rude: I don't get up when you come into the room and open the door for you, and shut the window. Claude—brother Claude—does all these things, and yet he's a cad.'

'I consider Claude a perfect gentleman,' said Lady Austell with finality.



'I know: that "perfect" spoils it all,' said Jim meditatively. 'Now Mr. Osborne is a frank cad—that's how I put it—and Claude a subtle one. That's why I can't stand him.'

'I dare say you'll do your best to live on him,' said Lady Austell. 'Certainly; though I shall probably succeed without doing my best. It will be quite easy, I expect.'

'And do you think that is a gentlemanly thing to do?' asked his mother, 'when behind his back you call him a subtle cad?'

'Oh yes, quite, though no perfect gentleman would dream of doing it. I think Claude has masses of good points: he simply bristles with them, but he gives one such shocks. He goes on swimmingly for a time, and then suddenly says that somebody is "noble-looking," or that the carpet is "tasteful" or "superior." Now Mr. Osborne doesn't give one shocks: you know what to expect, and you get it all the time.'

Lady Austell thought this over for a moment: though Austell was quite unsatisfactory in almost all ways of life, it was impossible to regard him as a fool, and he had the most amazing way of being right. Certainly this view of the frank cad and the subtle cad had an air of intense probability about it, but it was one of those things which his mother habitually chose to ignore and if necessary deny the existence of.

'I hope you will not say any of those ridiculous things to Dora,' she remarked.

'Ah: then it is just because they are not ridiculous that you wish me to leave them unsaid. If they were ridiculous you would not mind——'

Jim waited a second to give his mother time to contradict this if she felt disposed. Apparently she did not, and he interrupted her consenting silence.

'I shall not say them to Dora, I promise you,' he said, 'because, in case they had not occurred to her, she might see the truth of them, and it might put her off. That would damage my chances of living on him. It would be very foolish of me. Besides, I have no quarrel with Dora—I like Dora. But my saying these things to her is superfluous, I am afraid. She sees them all perfectly, though to you they apparently seem ridiculous. Or am I wrong, mother, and do you only pretend to think them ridiculous?'

Lady Austell felt she could fight a little on this ground.

'They seem to me quite ridiculous in so far as they apply to Dora,' she said. 'She is deeply in love with him, dear child, and do

you suppose that she stops to consider whether he says "tasteful" or not?

Jim smiled with faint malice.

'No, she does not stop to consider whether he says it or not,' he replied, 'because it is perfectly clear that he does. But when he does, she pauses. Not for long, but just for a second. She doesn't exactly wince, not a whole wince at least, but just a little bit of one. You can't help it if you are not accustomed to it. If I was going to marry Mrs. Osborne, I should wince a little now and then. I don't in the least wonder that she's in love with him. I wish you would find me a girl, who would marry me, as handsome and rich as Claude. The only thing is——'

Jim had finished breakfast, and was going slowly round the room looking at the furniture. He paused in front of a saddlebag divan with his head on one side.

'The only thing is that though she may get accustomed to "tasteful," she may also get accustomed to his extraordinary good looks. Of course, then there's the money to fall back upon. I don't think I should ever get accustomed to so much. What is—is Uncle Alfred going to allow him on his marriage?'

'Fifteen thousand a year, I believe,' said Lady Austell gently, as if mentioning some departed friend.

Jim gave a little sigh in the same style. He had a dreadfully inconvenient memory, and remembered that the original sum suggested was twelve thousand, which his mother had thought decent but not creditable. There was no doubt, so he framed the transaction to himself, that she had 'screwed this up' to fifteen. So he sighed appreciatively, and his comment that followed was of the nature of a testimonial.

'When I marry I shall leave the question of settlements completely in your hands, if you will allow me,' he said. 'I think you are too clever for anybody.'

It was not once or twice, but many times, that Lady Austell had told her son the complete truth in answer to some question of his, and when she had said 'fifteen thousand, I believe,' it was only reasonable to expect that the answer would be satisfactory. But Jim always remembered something else, and his memory was terribly good. It was not that he considered twelve thousand a poor sum: he only recalled to his mother's mind the fact that she had successfully suggested fifteen. And he had not openly stated the fact: he had merely requested her kindly aid with regard to his own

marriage settlements, if there were ever to be any. That should have been to her a completely gratifying request ; as it was, it left her with the sense of having been found out. The complete correctness of this impression was shown by Austell's next words.

'I think you have been fearfully brilliant about it,' he said, 'and I am sure you have made them all think that you considered fifteen thousand far too much. Do tell me: didn't you say that you thought it was a great responsibility for so young a couple to be—to be stewards of so much wealth? Lord, how I wish somebody would make me a steward. Come in.'

Somebody had tapped at the door, and to tell the truth Lady Austell was not very sorry to have an interruption, for she had actually used the words that Jim had conjectured in a little talk with Mr. Osborne and his brother in which settlements were very genteelly and distantly alluded to. But there had been a distinct twinkle in Alfred's eye at his point, and she did not want more cross-examinations. The interruption, therefore, was welcome.

Mrs. Osborne entered, looking hot and pleased. Jim at this moment was looking at a large engraving of Landseer's 'Monarch of the Glen' (part of the No. 1 white boudoir set) in an angle of the room parallel to the door, and she did not at once see him.

'Good morning, Lady Austell,' she said. 'I thought I would just step up and see what you would fancy doing this beautiful day. There's some of the party going to motor over to Pevensey—'

Mrs. Osborne caught sight of Jim, and gave a faint scream.

'And I'm sure if I don't beg your pardon, Lord Austell,' she said with averted head, 'for I never guessed you were here paying a morning visit to your mamma in your bath-wrapper. But I thought somebody said "Come in," for I always tap at every door now, or clear my throat to give warning, with so many lovers about, bless them.'

'Yes, I said "Come in,"' said Austell. 'Mayn't I come and talk to you and my mother? I thought my dressing-bath wrapper was rather smart.'

It was rather, being of blue silk, new and unpaid for, and with Mrs. Osborne's permission he joined them. It had given her quite a turn for a moment to find that she had intruded on an Earl in his dressing-gown, but she rapidly recovered.

'Why, it's beautiful,' she said, 'and such a figure as Mr. O. is in his old green padded wrapper as hardly comes to his knees! It

was the thought of that that gave me such a turn at finding a gentleman in his dressing-gown. But I'm sure I needn't have minded. And what will you be thinking of doing, Lord Austell? It's Liberty Hall, as Mr. O. and I always tell our guests, and the more they say what they like to do the better we're pleased.'

Lady Austell had lit a cigarette just before Mrs. Osborne's entrance, and, still looking at her, with her usual bereaved, regretful smile, was making efforts to pass it to Jim behind the shelter of the table. He observed this, and with a stealthy movement took it from her, for though they exposed each other in private they were firm allies in the presence of others.

'I've been having such a scolding from my mother,' he said, 'for smoking in here, but I told her you were far too good-natured to mind. Have I done very wrong?'

Mrs. Osborne beamed.

'And me just saying that the more our guests pleased themselves the better we were pleased!' she exclaimed. 'Well, what is it to be, Lady Austell? A drive to Pevensey, with Sir Thomas and Mrs. Percy, and I'm sure there'll be no difficulty about getting another gentleman when it's known as you are going, or a stroll or what not, and a bit of lunch quietly at home, and maybe a drive afterwards? Give it a name, Lady Austell, and it's settled.'

Lady Austell turned one glance of gratitude at her son, and continued to smile at her hostess.

'You are too kind,' she said, 'but as I've just been telling Austell, what I should really like to do best would be to spend the morning quietly by myself, going over the dear old place again. And then may we see how the afternoon turns out?'

This pathetic mention of the 'dear old place,' though dilapidated old barrack would have been a far more accurate description of Grote as it was, made Mrs. Osborne feel quite apologetic. She spoke to her husband about it afterwards. 'I assure you, my dear,' she said, 'to see her sitting there with that sad smile it was quite touching, as if it ought to have been she who asked me what I would fancy doing. Well, it's one up and another down in this world, and after all we've done something in taking the place off their hands, and putting a stick or two of furniture in it, and keeping the rain out. And the white boudoir suite, it looks beautiful: I hadn't seen it since they put it in.'

'Well, I'm sure the oftener Lady A. favours us with her visits, the more we shall be pleased,' said Mr. Osborne. 'And we give

them a rattling good rent for it, my dear, when all's said and done. Why, there's the motor coming round now, and the clock striking twelve already. Sir Thomas would like a glass of sherry, I'll be bound, before his long drive.'

'And I must see cook,' said Mrs. Osborne, 'and half the morning gone already. Have you any fancy for dinner to-night, my dear?'

Mr. Osborne thought for a moment.

'No, peace and plenty, my dear,' he said, 'such as we've always had, Maria. I shall be in for lunch, too. Thank God, old Claude doesn't want any music to-night. We was hurried away from table last night, and I think Sir Thomas felt he hadn't done justice to my port: '40, Maria, and needs a lot of justice. But to-night he shall have his skin-full.'

'Well, but Claude has said as how pleased Dora was with the music,' said Mrs. Osborne, 'and we're going to have a second go this evening. You can't deny them their music, Mr. O.'

Mr. Osborne paused on his way to the door.

'Nor I don't want to,' he said, 'though myself, I hate that scratching sound. But last night, Mrs. O., I don't mind telling you, what with young—young Franklin lighting up before we'd got into the wine at all, and Claude and he leaving the room to join the ladies, and, I'm sure I don't wonder, the dining-room was a sort of Clapham Junction. And you telling me not to stop too long there and all! To-night give us time to sit and think, and if Claude wants his concert, God bless the boy, let him have it. But let it be made clear that those who want their wine and a talk, sit and have it, and don't feel they're expected. It's little I drink myself, as well you know, but there's Sir Thomas, who's a fish for his liquor, and little harm it seems to do him. I like my guests to have what they want, Maria, and there's no reason why some of us shouldn't stay quiet and pass the bottle, while others listen to them fiddles. That's the way we've got on, old lady, by giving everybody what they want, and of the best quality. Well, let's do so still. Those that care to leave the table this evening, let them leave, but don't let there be any pressure on such as like to remain. Lord, if there's Mrs. Per not coming out already with all her fallals on! I must go and get Sir Thomas his glass of sherry.'

Mr. Osborne was in every way the most hospitable of men, and he would have felt it as a personal disgrace if (as never happened) any guest of his had not all the wine he wanted, even as he would have felt it a personal disgrace if any guest was not met at the

station, or did not have sufficient breakfast. But wine to his mind was something of quite a different class to all other hospitalities, and was under his personal control, so that if Sir Thomas liked his drop of sherry in the middle of the morning, Mr. Osborne, if the sherry decanter, as proved to be the case this morning, was empty, had personally to go down to the cellar, followed by Thoresby with a taper, and fish out from the bin the bottle he wanted. Moreover, as the motoring party had finished breakfast nearly two hours before, and would not get their lunch for nearly two hours after, Mrs. Osborne had ordered a tray of the more sustaining sorts of sandwiches, a cold ham, and a dish or two of fruit, to be put ready in the dining-room to fortify them for their drive; for when they did have lunch it would only be a cold picnic kind of lunch which they carried with them in a huge wicker basket like a coffin, which two of the resplendent footmen were even now staggering under, and bearing out to the motor. For the sake of good-fellowship several of the party who were not going on this prodigious expedition joined the travellers in this collation, for, as Mr. Osborne said, with a large plate of ham in front of him, 'it made a bit of a break in the morning to have a mouthful of sherry and a dry biscuit. Help yourself, Per, my boy, for you're the guard of this personally-conducted tour, and you'll need a bite of something before you get your lunch.'

Jim Austell meantime had gone back to his room, from which he ejected two flurried housemaids who were emptying things into each other, and dressed in a leisurely manner. He found a letter or two on his dressing-table, and among them a note from Mr. Osborne's secretary containing an extremely satisfactory cheque for the first quarter's rent of Grote, and with great promptitude he despatched it to his bank. Then, coming downstairs and out on to the terrace, he found Claude rather impatiently waiting for the return of Dora, who had strayed off after breakfast with May Thurston, and challenged him to a game of croquet, in which the two were still engaged when the girls came back from their walk. They refused to join, and May went into the house while Dora drew a chair to the edge of the ground and watched. Jim, wallowing in the remembrance of his cheque, had proposed a sovereign on the game and Claude had accepted. The game, therefore, since money was concerned, was serious, but Dora, not knowing this, was not. She had a great deal to say.

'I think Englishmen are perfect butchers,' she said. 'The whole of the long glade is simply one mass of the most heavenly

young pheasants, who ran to us in flocks to be fed. Then comes October, and when they run to be fed you shoot them in the eye.'

'There you're wrong, Dora,' said Jim, calmly taking aim, 'you shoot at running rabbits, but not——'

'Oh well, you know what I mean, and you call it sport. There, that serves you right, Jim; now it's Claude's turn and he's got you. Oh, Claude, what a beautiful shot! Wasn't it lucky it hit the wire first, if it hadn't it would have missed blue altogether.'

Claude did not reply: even though it was Dora who was talking, the fact that at the present moment he was playing a game over-ruled all other considerations. He would have much preferred to stop playing the game, and talk to her instead, but since that was impossible he continued to be entirely absorbed in what he was doing. The balls (after the beautiful shot) were well placed for a break, but a little consideration was necessary. Then a somewhat lengthy and faultless exhibition followed. At the end he came and sat down on the grass by Dora.

'Not a bad break,' he said, 'I shall have a cigarette.'

'What are we going to do after lunch?' asked she gently, as Jim walked off to the far end of the ground.

'Just exactly whatever you like so long as we do it by ourselves. I haven't seen you all the morning.'

'I know; it's been beastly,' said she, 'but May's a dear, you know, and she wanted to talk about Harry, and I rather wanted to talk about you, so we both talked together, and I can't remember a word she said.'

Claude was lying face downwards on the grass, nursing his match, and Dora was looking at the short hair on the back of his neck. Then quickly and suddenly she looked up.

'Oh, Jim, you cheated,' she cried. 'I saw you move that ball with your foot. What a brute he is! He always cheats at croquet, and is always found out. I don't cheat: I only lose my temper. Claude, dear, keep an eye on him. Or perhaps you cheat too, do you? Oh, what a heavenly day! Do let's go on the lake after you've finished your game. You shall row and steer, and I shall encourage you.'

Dora passed over the fact of Jim's cheating as she passed over the other numerous topics of her conversation, things to be alluded to and left behind, and Claude, sitting up again when he had got a light, made no comment whatever on it. Jim continued to play



calmly and correctly, and at the end of his break came towards them, leaving an unpromising position.

'You talk more rot in a short space of time than anyone I ever saw,' he remarked to Dora. 'What with shooting at running pheasants and saying I cheat, you make my head whirl.'

'Oh, but you did, I saw you,' said Dora calmly. 'Why not grant it?'

She paused a moment as Claude aimed, and then continued:

'Oh, Claude, what bad luck! Or did it hit it? I almost thought I saw it tremble, and in a minute I shall be sure of it.'

'I thought it hit,' said Jim.

'No, I'm sure it didn't,' said Claude. 'Full inch between them.'

The game was over in a couple of turns after this, but Dora, finding it hot on her grassy bank, had gone down to sit in the boat and wait for Claude. At the conclusion of the game he produced a sovereign and handed it to Jim.

'You gave me a good thrashing,' he said, 'couldn't get in but that once.'

'Thanks. Yes, you had bad luck all through. I say . . . You're satisfied that Dora was talking nonsense?'

'About what?'

'When she said I cheated. Of course I did nothing of the kind.'

'Why, of course I'm satisfied if you tell me so,' said Claude. 'Are you coming down to the lake?'

'Not I. Dora would hurl me overboard.'

Claude strolled away, and Jim walked aimlessly about, taking shots across the lawn with various balls. He knew perfectly well that he had cheated, but it was the worst luck in the world that Dora had looked up at that moment. There had been a ball quite close to his, but as far off as if it had been in a better world by reason of the fact that it was lying neatly and inaccessibly behind the stump. He had just moved it with his foot as he went by, without, so he told himself, more than half meaning to. That was quite characteristic of him; he but rarely fully meant that sort of thing; something external to himself seemed to suggest a paltry little manoeuvre of this kind, and he yielded to it in an absent-minded sort of way, without any particular intention. Had the game, in fact, gone on without attention being called to it, he would probably have nearly forgotten about it by now.

But Claude's remark, though innocent and even cordial (considering what he himself privately knew), irritated him a good deal. Claude had said that of course he was satisfied since Jim had told him so. That looked as if he would not have been satisfied if he had not been told, an utterly unjustifiable attitude, since he had never given Claude, so far as he knew, the very smallest grounds for supposing that he himself was capable of cheating at croquet or anything else. Perhaps in Sheffield it was the right thing to cheat, and at the end of the game everyone who had not cheated told his opponent so, who then kindly accepted his word. Claude would find, however, that among the sort of people he now moved it wasn't correct to cheat, in fact it was distinctly advisable not to. Indeed, in a very few minutes Jim felt rather as if Claude had cheated, and he was himself kind, but a little troubled about it.

Then—he felt almost ashamed of himself for dwelling so long on so small an incident—he looked at the matter afresh. He had cheated, and pocketed a sovereign probably in consequence. That was a very small sum of money to cheat for, but he distinctly wished that it had not occurred. And then he threw down again the mallet he had taken up.

'Fact is, I'm a rotten chap,' he said to himself, and there was no dissentient voice in his brain.

Claude meantime had gone down to the lake after Dora. If he had been obliged to give his thoughts the definiteness of words, he would certainly have said that he thought the whole thing rather odd, but then, being of an extremely loyal and unsuspicious nature, he would have endorsed his remark to Jim, that his word was quite sufficient, and have turned his thoughts resolutely elsewhere. He did not want to think about such very nasty little things as cheating at croquet, whether there was a penny or a sovereign or nothing at all on the game, and he did not wish to examine a certain doubt that lurked in the bottom of his mind as to whether Dora had seen correctly or not. The doubt was in the shade anyhow, and he let it lie there. But if anyone had told him (or Jim either) that the incident was a trifling and microscopic one, both would have been quite right to deny that. It was true that a game only and a sovereign were concerned, but the 'directing' power was no less important a personage than honour. It really makes a great difference in the daily journey through life if that charioteer is at his post or not.

'Sorry for keeping you, darling,' he said to Dora, 'but we had to finish the game. It didn't take long, did it? I got my head knocked off.'

Dora had already established herself, and he pushed out through the shallow water, where the weeds trailed whispering fingers against the bottom of the boat, to deeper water.

'How clever of you to screw it on again so quick,' said she. 'Yes, it's quite straight. Oh, Claude, I've been thinking such a lot since I left you. How funny it is how little tiny things, like Jim's cheating just now, suggest such a lot of other ones not at all tiny.'

Claude gave a little short uncomfortable laugh.

'I say, darling, do you know,' he said, 'if I were you I shouldn't say that sort of thing even to me. He didn't cheat: he told me so. So you must have been mistaken, and it's an awful pity to let things like that ever be talked about. But let's go on to the big things which it (though it didn't happen) suggested.'

Dora paid no attention whatever to these excellent moral reflections, but merely waited with her mouth open till he had finished in order to speak again.

'Oh, but he did, he did,' she cried. 'I saw him with both eyes. We never could play together because he always cheated and I always lost my temper. How funny of him not to confess.'

Claude did not reply for the moment: it was all rather uncomfortable.

'Well, now for the big things,' he said.

'Oh, bother the big things,' said Dora. 'I know you think I am wrong, and I'm not. I'm never wrong. I'm perfectly certain.'

She stopped suddenly and leaned over the side of the boat, dabbling her hand in the water. She saw some unuttered trouble in Claude's face, and a rather dreadful conjecture occurred to her.

'Claude, you weren't playing for money, were you?' she asked in a low voice.

He made up his mind in a moment and acted with promptitude.

'Good gracious, no,' he said. 'What will you be suggesting next?'

But Dora was still grave.

'Oh, I am glad,' she said, with relief. 'And do let's talk about something else. I dare say I was quite wrong about Jim moving

that ball. Oh, I know I wasn't,' she cried. 'It was only a game, you see, and there was nothing on it, and oh, poor Jim, you see he always used to cheat. It was just the same at billiards; if the balls were touching he used to go on before he really looked to see if they were. And that leads on to the big things.'

He had stopped rowing, and with the impetus which the boat had acquired in those vigorous strokes he made to get clear of the weeds they were drifting towards the little island in the centre of the lake, where the swans made their nests. It was rimmed about with soft-branched willows that trailed yielding boughs towards the water, and the boat glided in under their drooping fingers, and ran on to a soft sandy promontory, where it beached its bows, while the enfolding willow gave shade.

'Yes, the big things,' said Dora. 'It's just this, darling. You've got heaps of attractions, but I'm not sure that one of your nicest things isn't that you are so safe. It is such fun being able to trust a person quite completely and entirely and know one is right in doing so. I don't believe you ever scheme or make plans. Mother does, and Jim does, and people get so keen on their plan that other things get rather out of focus. They go—oh, it's like hounds when they are really running well: they don't look at the scenery, you know. They put their dear noses down and follow, follow. And it's all because of money—no, not the hounds, don't be so foolish—but it is an advantage not to want to bother about money. I *do* like to know that I needn't bother any more at all, and that if I want to take a cab I can. Somebody—Pierre Loti, I think—said it must be exquisite to be poor. Well, it isn't. It's far more exquisite to be rich. Of course I had great fun about trimming a hat for twopence, and making it look as if it came from May's shop—Biondonetti, isn't it?—but really I should much prefer to order hats direct. Wouldn't you?'

Claude happened to be hatless, but he passed his hand over his head instead, as if to recapture the sensation of ordering hats.

'I suppose I order mine,' he said. 'I'm sure I never made one. I shouldn't know how to set about it.'

'No, darling, you don't wear two feathers—and—nothing else. A hat of two feathers is fearfully smart.'

'Are these the big things you proposed to talk about?' asked Claude.

'No, as if hats mattered. Oh, Claude, you're moulting. A short black hair! And there's another sticking out. May I pull?'

He bent his head a little down : she pulled, and he screamed. The hair remained where it was.

'And is that a big thing?' asked he again.

'No, donkey : darling donkey. You will interrupt so about hats. As if anybody cared where you got your hats, and you haven't got one. How did you lead the conversation round to hats? Let's see, it was Austell first, and then . . . then, oh, yes, I said you were safe. And now I think I'll go on. You may sit down here, if you like. There's room for us both. Let's be common, as May said about—about people like us, the other day. I would change hats with you, if you had one. As it is——'

Dora pulled the thick black curls.

'Oh, I wish you had a wig,' she said, 'and nobody knew but me. I shouldn't mind, and everybody would say what beautiful hair you had, and I should know it wasn't real, and shouldn't tell. It would be such fun. Then some day you would annoy me, and I should tell everybody it was only a wig. Claude, when I am old and wrinkly and quite, quite ugly, do you suppose you will care the least little bit any more for me? Oh, dear, I felt so extraordinarily gay all the morning, and now I've gone sad all in a minute! Oh, do comfort me! There is such a lot of grey business in life, unless one dies quite young, which it would immensely annoy me to do. I wonder how we shall stand the grey business, you and I, when we each see the other getting older and more wrinkled and stiffer, stiffer not only in limb, and that is bad enough, but stiffer in mind, which is infinitely worse. No, don't look at me like that, but sit up and be sensible. It has got to be faced.'

Unconsciously, or at the most half-consciously, she was sounding him; she knew quite well that there were beautiful things to be said and said truly about what she had called the grey business of life, and she wondered, longing that it might be so, whether there was within him that divine alchemy which could see how the grey could be changed into gold. Never had she felt his physical charm so potent as now, when he sat up obedient to her orders and leaned forward towards her, with a look, a little puzzled, a little baffled, in his eyes. Almost she was tempted to say to him, 'Oh, it doesn't matter, nothing matters beside this exquisite day and you—you, as I know you already,' but some very deep-lying vein of curiosity wholly feminine, and very largely loving, made her not interrupt her own question, but wait, with just a touch of anxiety, for his reply. She and Claude, she felt, would have some

day to be far more intimately known by each other than they were now. Of him she knew little but his personal beauty, though she felt sure that, as she had said to May, he was good, and, as she had said to him, that he was safe. And of her she guessed that he knew no more; that he loved her she had no doubt, but she felt that she had shown him as yet but little beyond that which all the world saw, her quick and eager attitude towards life, the iridescent moods of her effervescent nature. There was something that sat below these, her real self. She wanted Claude to know that, even as she wanted to know his real self.

This was all vague to her though real, instinctive rather than describable, and flashed but momentarily through her mind as she waited for his reply. But that reply came at once: Claude seemed to find no difficulty about the facing of the grey business.

'There's no cause to worry,' he said. 'Just look at Dad and the Mater! Isn't he in love with her still? And I expect what you call the grey business for a woman cannot begin while her husband loves her. I don't suppose either of them ever gave a look, so to say, at anybody else. Think of the way he proposed her health last night! Not much grey business about that! Why, it was as if she was his best girl still, and that he'd just come a-courting her, instead of their having been married over thirty years. And she is his best girl still, just as you will ever be mine. And as for her, why he's her man still. How's that for the grey business?'

Dora felt one dreadful moment's inclination to laugh. She had asked for a sign that he could turn the grey into gold, and for reply she got the assurance that she might put her mind at rest with the thought of what Mr. and Mrs. Osborne were to each other! She knew that for that moment she only saw the ludicrous side of it, and that a very real and solid truth was firm below it, but somehow it was not what she wanted. She wanted . . . she hardly knew what, but something of the spirit of romance that triumphantly refuses to acquiesce in the literal facts of life, and sees all things through the many-coloured blaze of its own light. She wanted the grey business laughed at, she wanted the assurance that she could never grow old, given with a lover's superb conviction, and to be received by her with the unquestioning credulity of a child. No doubt it ought to have been very comforting to think that the years would leave them with the very warm and comfortable affection which 'Dad and the Mater' had for each

other, and she ought to be glad that Claude felt so sure of that. But, to her mind, there was about as much romance in it as in a suet pudding.

He saw the eagerness die from her face, and the shadow of her disappointment cross it.

'And what is it now, dear?' he asked.

Dora tossed her head back, a trick she had caught from him.

'It isn't anything now,' she said, 'it all concerns years that are centuries away. I think it was foolish of me to ask at all.'

'I don't think it was in the least,' said he. 'You said it had to be faced, and I think I've given it a facer, at least the example of the governor and the mater has. Besides, there are other things that will colour up the grey matter—children, we hope, sons going to school and daughters growing up.'

Again Dora knew that he spoke with excellent sense, but again she felt that it was not sense she wanted so much as lovers' nonsense, which is more essentially real than any sense. She wanted something airy, romantic, golden. . . . And then she looked at him again, and her wants faded from her. He brought her himself. She gave a little sigh and raised herself till her face was on a level with his.

'Oh Claude, I should be a donkey if I was not content,' she said.

'Lord, there'd be a pair of us then, if I wasn't,' said he.

Sunday succeeded, and breakfast in consequence was put an hour earlier so that any servant in the house could go to church. Mr. Osborne himself, though the day was already of scorching heat, came down in a black frock-coat suit of broad-cloth, and his wife rustled in black satin. It was clearly expected that all their guests would go also, for at half-past ten a stream of vehicles drove to the door past the window of the smoking-room.

'Got to start early,' said he, 'so that the men may put up the cattle and come too, but there's no call for you gentlemen to put out your cigars. The ladies won't mind a whiff of tobacco in the open air, Sir Thomas, and the church is but a step outside the Park gates, so that you can sit and finish there. There are the ladies assembling. Time to go: never keep the fair sex waiting, hey? or else the most indulgent of them will turn a cold shoulder.'

The church, as Mr. Osborne had said, was but a stone's-throw beyond the Park gates, and as they all arrived at twenty minutes



to eleven there was time, before the groaning of the organ summoned them in, to have a turn under the trees, and finish the cigars that had barely been begun.

It had been so taken for granted that everybody was coming to church that out of all the party there was only one absentee, namely, Austell, to whose room Mr. Osborne had sent with inquiries if he was ready, and the suggestion to send back the motor for him if he was not. But he certainly was not ready, and the motor had not gone back for him, since he had said that he was not very well. Otherwise the whole of the party was there, and by degrees strayed into church. Mrs. Osborne had gone there at once from the carriage with Lady Austell, in order to escape from the heat, and they were already seated in the big square family pew which belonged to the house when the others began to come in. Sir Thomas and Mr. Osborne were the last, because they had been discussing the recent rise in the price of tin up till the last moment. They entered, indeed, so shortly before the procession of four choir boys, two men and the vicar, that Mr. Osborne had barely time to sit down by his wife in the place she always kept for him next her in church, after standing up and putting his face in his hat, before he had to stand up again. Sir Thomas sat next Lady Austell. The two looked rather like a codfish in conjunction with a withered lily.

The pew was four-sided, the fourth side opening into the body of the church through the easternmost of the arches of the south aisle. In the centre of it was a very beautiful alabaster monument to the first Earl and his wife, while the window was of exquisite early German glass to the memory of the second. Elsewhere in numbers round the walls were other smaller tablets, some bearing medallions, others merely catalogues of the cardinal virtues with which the deceased were blessed, but the whole place was historical, established. And here this morning sat Mr. Osborne and his family and friends; among whom was Lady Austell and her daughter, who was going to join together the two families. She sat just opposite Claude, and of them all, he alone to the most observant eye was ambiguous. He might as well, so far as appearance went, have been of the Austells as of the Osbornes.

Dora, it was to be feared, was not very attentive, and her face wore that peculiarly rapt look which, as May Thurston had once told her, was a certain indication that she was not thinking about what was going on. As far as the service of the church went that

was true ; she was completely occupied with the occupants of the pew. The sermon was in progress, and her mother sat with eyes mournfully fixed on the Elizabethan monument in the centre, just as if the first Earl had been her husband, while next her Sir Thomas had his eyes fixed on nothing at all, for they were tightly closed. His wife, next to him, but round the corner, made futile little attempts to rouse him to consciousness again, by pretending to put her parasol in a more convenient place, so that it should incidentally hit his foot. This, eventually, she succeeded in doing, and he opened one eye and rolled it drowsily and reproachfully at Lady Austell, as if she had interrupted some celestial reverie. Then he closed it again.

Claude, as Dora felt, had observed this, and was looking at her, so she passed over him, for fear of catching his eye, and went on to Uncle Alfred, who sat next him. He was closely wrapped up in a shawl that went over his shoulders, and a certain stealthy movement of his lower jaw caused her to suspect that he was eating some sort of lozenge. Then came Mrs. Osborne : Dora could hear her rather tight satin bodice creak to her breathing. She had the Bible in which she had verified the text open on her lap, and she was listening intently to the sermon, which was clearly to her mind, for her plump, pleasant face was smiling, and her eyes fixed on the preacher were a little dim : her smile was clearly one of those smiles of very simple happiness which are allied to tenderness and tears. And then Dora focussed her ear and heard what was being said :

‘ So this earthly love of ours,’ said the preacher, ‘ is of the same immortal quality. Years do not dim it : it seems but to grow stronger and brighter as the mere purely physical part of it—— ’

And then Dora’s eye was focussed again by a movement on the part of Mrs. Osborne, and her ear lost the rest of the sentence. Mrs. Osborne gave a great sigh and her dress a great creak, and simultaneously she took away the hand that was supporting the Bible in which she had verified the text, so that it slid off the short and steeply-inclined plane between her body and her knee, and fell face downwards on the floor. She did not heed this : she laid her hand, waking kaleidoscopic colours in her rings as she moved it, on the hand of her husband, who sat next her.

He, too, had been following the sermon with evident pleasure, and it was hard to say to which of them the movement came first. For within the same fraction of a second his hand also let fall the

silk hat which he had already gathered up in anticipation of the conclusion, and in the same instant of time it was seeking hers. His head turned also to her, as hers to him, and a whispered word passed between them. Then they smiled, each to the other, and the second whisper was audible right across the monument of Francis first Earl, to Dora, where she sat opposite to them.

'Maria, my dear,' whispered Mr. Osborne, 'if that isn't nice!'

Then Mrs. Osborne's belated consciousness awoke; she withdrew her hand and picked up her Bible.

Mr. Osborne's instinct in taking up his hat had been quite correct: the Doxology followed, and a hymn was given out. He and his wife, so it was clear to Dora, had no consciousness except for each other and the hymn. She was the first to find it in her hymn-book, while he still fumbled with his glasses, and when they all stood up he shared the book with her, and put down his own.

Then the organ indicated the first lines of the tune, and again the two smiled at each other, for it was a favourite, as it had been sung at the service for the dedication of the church in Sheffield. They both remembered that, but that did not wholly account for their pleasure: it had been a favourite long before.

Mrs. Osborne sang what is commonly called 'second.' That is to say, she made sounds about a third below the air. Mr. Osborne sang bass. That is to say he sang the air an octave or thereabouts below the treble. They both sang very loudly, so also did Percy, so also did Mrs. Per, who sang a real alto.

And then without reason Dora's eyes grew suddenly dim. In the last verse Mrs. Osborne closed the large gilt-edged hymn-book with tunes, and looked at her husband. He moistened his lips as the last verse began and coughed once. Then Mrs. Osborne's rings again caught the light as she sought her husband's hand. And she started *fortissimo*, a shade before anybody else:

'And so through all the length of days——'

Mr. Osborne did not sing: his fat fingers closed on his wife's rings, and he listened to her. He would not have listened thus to Melba. He would not have been so completely absorbed if the seraphim had sung to him.

And then finally Dora looked at Claude. She thought she understood a little more. But she only saw a little more.

(To be continued.)

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